

CONTEMPORARY MARXIAN POLITICAL MOVEMENTS IN THE UNITED STATES

VOLUME I

by

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IN CONFESSION AND AVOIDANCE

" . . . No social form or institution must be regarded as too sacred to be submitted to critical examination and analysis, not monogamy, nor monotheism, nor the Constitution of the United States. No doctrine can be regarded as too new or novel to be given a chance to justify itself, not feminism, nor free love, nor communism. All things, old and new must be put on their merits, and judged against the background of the total accumulation of sociological fact and law."¹

I

Regardless of one's political beliefs, the days when students of political science could speak of the two political parties in the United States are past. There have arisen since the turn of the century new creeds to challenge sharply the basic assumptions underlying the Democratic and Republican parties. The merits of their claims aside, those who maintain that the political, social and economic doctrines of Karl Marx offer the solution to our present ills, form an articulate minority. This writer would like this volume to serve as an objective text and introduction to their beliefs, conduct and contentions. For, although numerous pamphlets, magazine articles and books have been written on the many phases of each of the contemporary Marxian political movements in this country, there is no single volume to which students can turn for a comprehensive survey.

The absence of such a text, perhaps surprising, should be understood without difficulty. First of all, any book which attempts a survey of the

¹Fairchild, Foundations of Social Life, p. 276.

current political Marxian scene, with history as an incidental background only, hazards being out of date in sections before the printer's ink is dry. Hardly anywhere does one find swifter changes than in the ranks of the professed Marxists. Strategy and tactics often vary from day to day, either because of an actual change of "objective conditions" or because a particular group is disappointed with the apathy shown by the American proletariat to the "line" it has pursued.

Again, an objective survey, something acceptable to the expert and illuminating the layman, is difficult of achievement. As Harold Laski has observed, "No book on communism [nor any other Marxian movement, for that matter -- W.I.] can hope to be impartial, for its problems are too urgent not to involve some bias, however unconscious."

II

In presenting the Marxian political movements in the United States, the writer has attempted to follow a somewhat uniform pattern for each: brief history; principles; strategy and tactics; criticism of other Marxian political movements.

Because of the extremely controversial nature of so much of the material under consideration, he has fallen back extensively upon quotations from official literature of each movement. He has not always permitted himself to record their views in his own language, particularly where the views set forth lack clarity and are ambiguous, as has often been the case. It should be observed that each quotation, unless otherwise noted, is an authorized statement issued by some political group in justification of its own position, or in criticism of its opponents. It is also important to note that, although quotations (whether exposi-

tions or criticisms) represent official positions, they are not necessarily correct statements. For example, if Party X accuses Party Z of misunderstanding the nature of fascism, such a statement represents an official stand, but that in itself is no conclusive proof that the allegations as made are correct. In short, the writer holds himself responsible only for the authenticity of the sources and the accuracy of the quotations.

Implicit in such a presentation is the grave danger that one will get a one-sided picture of a political party from its own literature, since self-glorification and adversary-belittling are more or less common characteristics of most political movements. But if this writer attempted to indicate periodically where he believed a quotation shows a reckless disregard for the truth or strays just a little from it, he would introduce a fatal subjectivity which would defeat an important feature of the book. However, the reader himself is in a position to make numerous checks. He should: read the official literature extensively, and look for discrepancies and contradictions between theory and practice within any movement; check the position of any given party with the criticisms made by all opponents. Whenever in doubt, he is urged to check the statements found in this book with official documents and statements issued by the group or party under consideration. He is especially cautioned against an uncritical acceptance of any viewpoint or criticism advanced by a professed party member or sympathizer of any group, unsupported by authentic evidence.

A few words on bibliography. The literature in the field is vast. As far as its finances permit, each party, group or faction issues books, pamphlets, magazines and newspapers. Most of this literature is strictly dated, and soon disappears from circulation. The problem of selecting

that literature which is most representative of what it purports to represent often causes difficulties. This writer has had access to practically all of the magazines, pamphlets, books and newspapers printed during the past decade, and to the most important literature issued before. He has endeavored to present at all times the most authoritative sources for the viewpoint expressed.

With the exception of the first of the introductory chapters, the reader may be surprised to find absent from these pages a number of independent Marxian writers more or less well-known in the United States. The reason for such omissions should be made clear. Since they are not affiliated with any Marxian political movement, their views and interpretations on Marxism, however important, do not represent official party positions. Thus they cannot be quoted in a work of this kind.

III

There are a number of self-imposed limits to this work. Basically, it is a study of Marxian political movements rather than political theory. Although political movements have their basis in theory, only a brief introductory chapter has been given to the leading schools of Marxism. The reader is referred elsewhere for a more thorough study of Marx's interpreters and schools of thought. The writer also wishes to state that it has not been feasible within the confines of a single volume to present every party position of every group, or even cover adequately all those presented. The reader is therefore again urged to fill whatever gaps he discovers by recourse to the official literature listed in the bibliographies.

Many of the problems which many contemporary Marxists regard as unresolved have not been discussed in these pages: Marxism and biology, psychology, nationalism, etc. These important questions have not always been made to seem directly concerned with the struggle for state power. Besides, many Marxian parties have taken no positions whatever on some of them.

No attempt has been made to present the criticism of Marxism by non-Marxists: fascists and numerous upholders of liberalism, democratic-capitalism, etc. Many easily available books have been written taking issue with Marxian sociology, politics and economics. This monograph is concerned only with the Marxian struggle for state power.

In dealing with each political party, only its official position is presented. Although a party decision closes an issue—at least for the time—it does not always find the entire organization internally united behind the new decision. A discontented outer fringe often remains. In consequence, hardly a week goes by without the publication of a letter of resignation in some official Marxian paper, written by a former member of some political party who is no longer in accord with the "line" of his old party, and who has transferred his allegiance to the group publishing his letter. This kind of a turnover, while not very great, is a steady one, indicating the ferment which goes on behind the scenes.

Although the writer has attempted to include all the established contemporary Marxian political movements, he is certain that he has not completely succeeded. New movements spring up perennially; among Marxists, disagreements are very common; the tendency to start another, more correct party is a sincere and ever-present urge. It is not uncommon for a few Marxists, in part agreement with each other and in total disagreement with

all other political groups, to get together and form a new tendency.

It will perhaps be questioned why many obscure splinter groups are included in this volume, while such movements as the American syndicalists and the anarchists are left out. However important, they do not fall within a study of Marxian political movements. The Marxists derive their basic philosophy and principles from the writings of Marx and Engels. Despite fundamental differences in tactics, they are all intent upon capturing state power (peacefully or otherwise) and utilizing it (through a workers' democracy, dictatorship of the proletariat, etc.) for establishing a new social order. While anarchists and syndicalists make an indictment of capitalism in terms almost identical with (and perhaps in large part derived from) Marx, their solution does not follow the Marxian pattern: they contend that they wish to capture the state, destroy it without utilizing it in any transitional period, and immediately establish a classless society.

For similar reasons, the Farmer-Labor movement is excluded. Although important, its analysis of capitalism and its solution of the question do not at all follow the Marxian pattern. Likewise the A.F.L. and C.I.O. movements as such have been omitted; they are purely economic, and do not aim at the capture of state power to establish socialism.

IV

It is a matter of speculation how Marxists as well as non-Marxists will receive this study. The writer will not undertake to estimate its value to the former, who will undoubtedly speak for themselves.

To the avowed conservative or liberal, who frankly disbelieves that civilization stands or falls with the correct interpretation and application of the principles of Marx, the struggles of the various Marxian factions may be construed as just so much sound and fury -- a tempest in a teapot. Even as Henshaw Ward² concluded from an examination of the contradictory viewpoints of philosophers that philosophy is "bunk", so too this study may tend to confirm their suspicion of the futility of Marxism. Nevertheless, the factional struggle of the Marxists among themselves and against capitalism is part of the vast political, social and economic unrest which is the dominant mood everywhere today. Even opponents of Marxism should find some interest in the conflicting Marxian patterns presented in these pages.

Between the avowed partisan Marxists and those who frankly reject its premises, there stand many intellectuals and workers who, rightly or wrongly, have come to the conclusion that something is basically unsound about the present socio-economic order. Many have turned leftward for guidance. The present volume should constitute a Cook's tour of the Marxian world for them. Perhaps they may be bitterly disappointed when they do not find that "all sweet accord" to which they may have looked forward. Lest they be dismayed by the antagonisms, dissensions and difficulties which beset the Marxists, a moment's reflection should show that, unless free thought is suppressed, differences are inevitable. This volume should therefore serve to familiarize them with the conflicting solutions offered by those holding at least nominally to the basic tenets of Marxism.

² See Thobbing and Builders of Delusion.

A few concluding thoughts. The writer must emphatically make clear that this volume has no thesis in the accepted meaning of the term. In it he has taken no position for or against Marxism, or any of its political movements. He has presented facts; the reader can draw his own conclusions, if any. What he has done, in discussing each movement, has been to play the role of devil's advocate, drawing up a brief reasonably fair to the adherents of that movement.

In an encyclopaedic work of this character, errors are unavoidable and inevitable, despite the care which has been exercised. The writer wishes to thank his many friends and those connected with the political movements under discussion who have read and criticized sections of this book. While he is grateful for their help and suggestions, he cannot shift responsibility for any of its shortcomings.

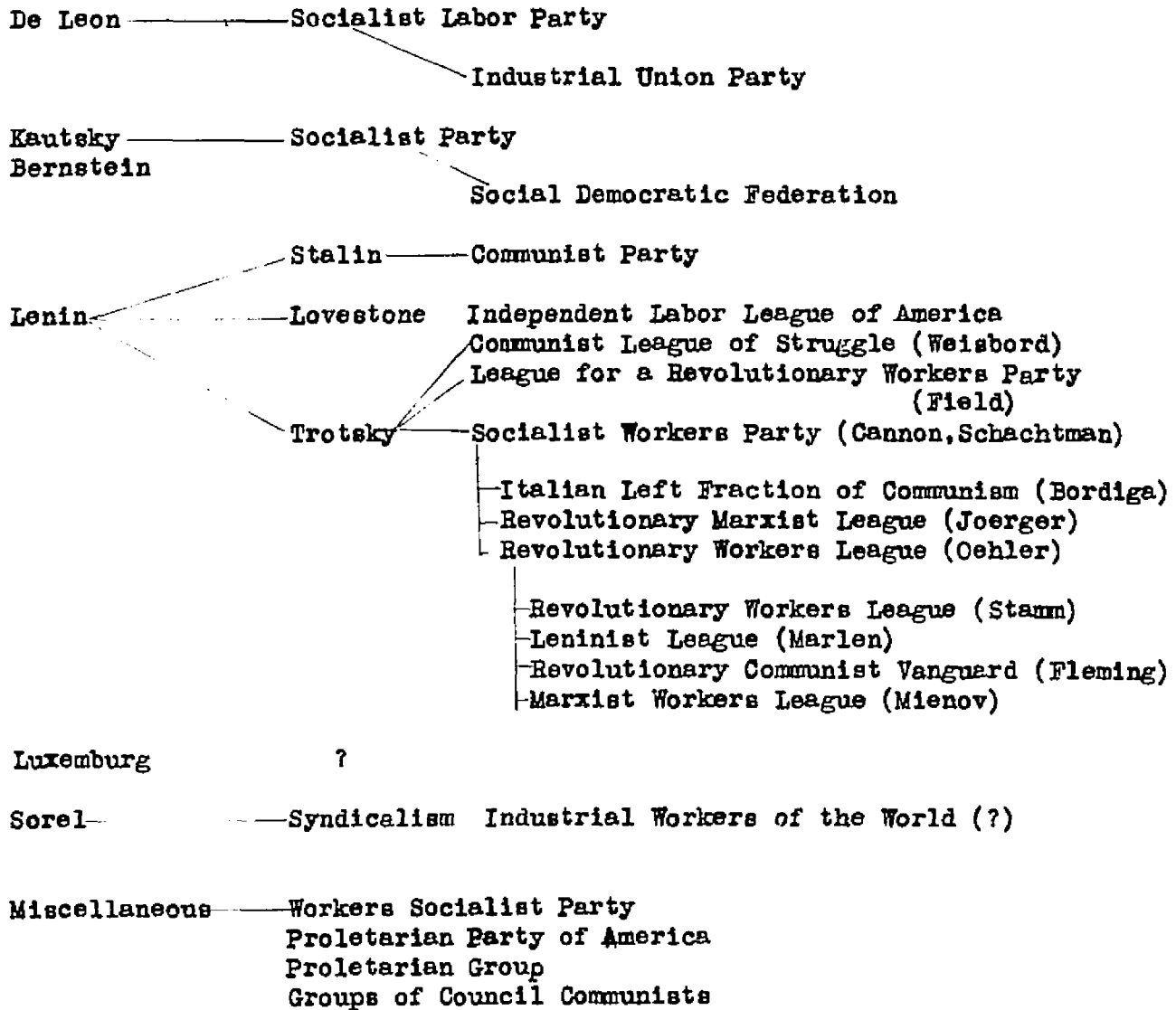
Finally, what Henry Pratt Fairchild of New York University has often told his classes, "All sociological generalizations must be dated," is especially applicable to this volume. Let it therefore be said that this study presents a picture of contemporary Marxian movements in the United States as of the date of this preface. If time soon leaves it behind, as the writer has intimated, it should still serve as a panoramic view of the period he has attempted to describe.

The Bronx, New York,
April 7, 1939.

William Isaacs

Contemporary Marxian Political Movements in the United States*

MARX AND ENGELS



*These movements are currently active. No significance is attached to the order of the listing. Numerous other tendencies are also to be found.

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PART I

INTRODUCTION

THE MARXIAN ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEMS OF POLITICAL THEORY

Introduction

It has become more or less a commonplace that relatively few persons living in any social order concern themselves with its problems and take an active part in shaping and directing its destinies. Most people are wholly absorbed in the routine of daily life: a job (or the search for one), family, friends, and recreation. From time to time they show some concern over conditions in the body politic, but invariably feel their incapacity to solve its perplexing difficulties. They solace themselves with the thought that those in power are more qualified to administer political affairs, and consequently can settle things more satisfactorily for all concerned. This attitude of general apathy coupled with periodic anxiety has been more or less characteristic of all strata of society, including the working class.

There is no way of knowing to what extent the masses of workers have ever been conscious of their relative poverty and insecurity, or how much they have blamed the capitalist system for their plight. Although general discontent and sporadic uprisings have been noted from the early days of the factory system, it remained for Marx and Engels, their followers declare, to arouse workers to a consciousness of their plight by presenting the first systematic and comprehensive picture of the role of workers under the capitalist system, an indictment of that system, and a program of action for their emancipation. Their diagnoses and prognoses have thus provided the basis for political movements designated as Marxian.

For many reasons, Marxian political movements have not generally

been looked upon with favor or regarded as important by academic political theorists. Nevertheless, Marxists insist that anyone interested in contemporary economic, political and social problems cannot afford to ignore their contention that Marxism is the only possible solution to the ills of capitalism and the evils of fascism. The strength of their position rests, they insist, not simply upon deductive analyses but upon detailed empirical studies; they have been specialists in pointing out the alleged inadequacies and deficiencies of capitalism and its concomitant political and social systems (capitalist-democracy and fascism).

The Problems of Political Philosophy

Persons who are intent upon building a new social order, regardless of its nature, generally follow a more or less uniform pattern. Armed with a political philosophy, express or implied, they must implement it with appropriate strategy and tactics for acquiring state power. And finally, as a condition precedent for carrying on their activities in an efficient manner, a party organization is necessary to co-ordinate and integrate their activities.

The many problems arising in connection with the creating of a new society have been stated and restated by political theorists many times in the past. Although there is little unanimity on important questions, the issues may be discussed and classified under these broad categories: (1) Political Science. (2) Political Ethics. (3) Political Strategy.

In a discussion of Political Science, many questions suggest themselves: (1) What are the objectives of political organization? Is political power an end in itself or a means to some end, such as economic

power, for example? (2) Does the state represent society in its entirety or is it an instrument of control by one section over the others? (3) On what is political control based? How does political power change hands? (4) Can the state be a democracy or is it always a disguised class dictatorship? (5) Where does political authority reside? (6) Is force or will the basis of the state? (7) How shall political power be exercised in the new society?

Under Political Ethics the following problems are relevant:

(1) What is the criterion of justice in the new society? (2) Is class rule justified? (3) Is force justified during a transitional era? Does the dictatorship of the proletariat represent an exercise of reasonable force? (4) Can individual liberty be reconciled with social security? (5) What are the rights of minorities under majority rule? (6) Can individual liberty be preserved during social planning? (7) Do bad means pervert desirable ends?

In matters of Political Strategy, Marxists have asked: (1) How shall political power be achieved? Is a revolution from the status quo possible? Can peaceful tactics be used, or is violence inevitable? (2) What form should the transitional stage from capitalism to socialism take? (3) Upon what principles and strategy should an international organization be formed? How much latitude should each section be allowed in carrying on its own affairs? To what extent must it be centralized or decentralized? (4) What attitudes should Marxian Political parties adopt towards the Soviet Union? Should their own strategy be affected by its foreign policy, and if so, to what extent? (5) What position should they take on questions of war? What wars, if any, should they support? Is the situation altered by "mixed" wars involving the Soviet

Union? (6) Into what political and economic relationships should Marxian political parties enter with each other and the labor movement in general? (7) What trade union policies should they pursue? (8) Should Marxian parties engage in parliamentary activity? Should they participate in non-Marxian governments? (9) Aside from their ultimate goal, should Marxists formulate any program of immediate demands? If so, on what basis? (10) What attitude should they take on such diverse questions as the New Deal, the Negro problem and the Labor party?

Political Science

Political Organization for What? Marxists do not differ from other political theorists in holding that political organization is not an end in itself, but a means to an end. Man organizes to further his conception of the good life. To the Marxists, the good society is one which recognizes the intrinsic worth of human personality and treats the individual as an end in the social scheme, and not simply as a means of enhancing and glorifying a mammoth creation -- the state. Objectively, a well-organized society must provide for economic security, physical well-being, political liberty and justice, social equality, peace and international good-will.

Unfortunately, Marxists argue, social organization does not always reflect the best means of satisfying social needs. Too often it is utilized by a dominant group to yield to itself a maximum of material satisfaction at the expense of the other members of the social order. This, they contend, is precisely what has happened under the present capitalist set-up; the social order is controlled and dominated by a minority group whose fundamental tenets have spelled hunger, unemploy-

ment and insecurity for the vast majority of its members. Consequently, they argue, capitalism must be replaced by another type of organization based upon collective ownership and operation of the means of production and distribution of all the necessities of life; the profit motive in production must be replaced by production for use; the fiction of democracy in politics and economics must give way to the fact.

Carrying their argument a step further, they also hold that a co-operative commonwealth organized nationally is but the first step in the achievement of their goal. Ultimately all mankind must be included within an international co-operative commonwealth. Marxists recognize, however, that many difficulties, theoretical and practical, beset them in their quest for this goal.

Objectives of State Power. Marx and his followers have defined the state in terms which have sharply distinguished them from most other students of political theory. The majority of sociologists and political theorists regard it as one of the agencies of social control, created in a given society for establishing and maintaining political conditions necessary for the functioning of that society, and for furthering the latter's objectives. Consequently the state exercises numerous coercive powers for preserving law and order; conducting relations with other societies, and promoting the general welfare of all the members of that society.

Marxists, on the other hand, have defined it more narrowly and delimited its meaning. To them the state is not an agency of the whole society but an instrument of suppression and coercion utilized by a dominant class (the capitalists in modern society) for exploiting and suppressing the others members of the social order. Marxists contend

that those who control the state are thus able to control all other aspects of social life because of the state's many agencies for formulating and enforcing its will: the army and navy; the police; the legislators; the courts and other legal institutions; the educational system; the press and the radio (and through them the modes of thinking). According to the Marxian analysis, the capitalist class will stop at nothing to maintain its hegemony over the state; it will practice fraud, deceit, suppression, judicial murder, and even war to remain in the ascendancy. Thus have Marxists utterly repudiated the conception commonly entertained by non-Marxists that the state, in its totality of activities, aims at promoting the common good of all the members of society.

Marxists further hold that political control of the state by the capitalist class is not an end in itself, but a means to an end: economic control of the social order. Domination of the state's numerous agencies enables it to control the society's natural resources, operate its industries with a minimum of restraint and interference, keep its hired workers in subjection and reap the huge profits inherent in the system of "private initiative, private enterprise and private profit". Thus political control has for its objective economic control, which, at the same time, further intensifies the existing political control because of the enormous power wielded by the owners of industry.

Overthrow of Capitalist Power. Since Marxists hold that political power and economic power are closely interwoven, it is scarcely possible to strike at one without undermining the other. To overthrow the capitalist system, which is their goal, they must attack it on two fronts: on the political front by striving to capture the state, and on the economic front by their trade union activities directed towards

preparing for the seizure of factories, mines, transportation facilities, workshops, etc. Thus the overthrow of capitalism is not complete until capitalists are ousted from state control and dispossessed from their ownership of the industrial system.

Marxists hold that the task of overthrowing capitalism lies with the working class and its allies, the farmers and some sections of the middle class. While it is to the ultimate interest of all classes to establish a classless society (capitalism also fails to provide economic security even for many capitalists), the working class is in a strategic position: it has suffered most from capitalism; the prospects of economic betterment resulting from the creation of a new society provide a strong motivation and stimulus for striving in that direction; it constitutes a majority of the members of the social order.

Socialism Inevitable? Is the downfall of capitalism a foregone conclusion? Here there is a difference of opinion among Marxists, despite some statements of Marx which have lent themselves to an affirmative interpretation. Some Marxists incline to the view that whether or not workers strive for socialism, a socialist economy must arise from and supersede capitalism, which is rapidly heading for collapse. Other Marxists reject any doctrine of inevitability divorced from working class action. This group holds that a socialist society is a potential outgrowth of decadent capitalism only if working class action is effectively organized and directed towards that goal.

Can the State be Democratic? Marxists regard capitalism not simply as an economic system but as a political and social way of life as well. Although, they hold, Big Business always controls the state, which is in reality a disguised class dictatorship, it is very often "democratic" in its outward manifestations; it provides a Bill of Rights; representa-

tive government; a constitution; universal suffrage, and other symbols of democratic control. Actually, however, Marxists allege, the democracy is one of form, not fact. All political democracy is within a capitalist frame of reference. The major parties, in their bare essentials, all uphold the status quo. When workers exercise their electoral rights they are simply choosing from among a number of advocates of the status quo, since the major parties are dominated by different sections of Big Business. The widely-heralded fundamental constitutional rights of free speech and press are strictly curtailed by a system of censorship in time of economic crisis or war; all avenues of information critical of the existing system are closed to workers when the need is greatest. The degree of nominal democracy thus maintained under the present social order is in direct ratio to the stability of capitalism. When, in a period of declining capitalism, the crisis becomes most acute, all forms of democracy are frankly abandoned and there results an out-and-out dictatorship which, in its extreme form, takes on the aspects of fascism. Consequently, Marxists aver, the workers must not be deceived by the democratic phraseology of the ruling class. Although the proletariat must constantly fight to extend its concrete political and economic rights of voting, striking, picketing and organizing, it must never for one moment be taken in by the shibboleth of democracy. (In a subsequent section it will be shown, however, that some Marxists have distinguished between capitalist democracy and fascism and have endeavored to defend the former against the latter.)

Where Does Political Authority Reside? Although Marxists do not customarily pose the problem in the terms of non-Marxian political

theorists, they implicitly hold that ultimate political authority lies with those who have produced society's basic needs: the proletariat, farmers, white-collar workers, intellectuals and professionals. Those who work and co-operate to satisfy individual and social necessities have the potential power to make of society what they will. Consequently political authority resides in the democratically-determined will of the workers. (By this ethical justification of political authority, supporters of capitalism are rendered disfranchised in any new social order.)

It should thus be observed that the Marxists have an abounding faith in the capacity of the masses for self-government and management in politics as well as industry. They deny the premises of the racial theorists and the philosophers of the elite -- Plato, Spengler, Pareto, Mosca, Sorokin, to name a few -- that the masses lack an actual or potential capacity for government. Given the opportunities to operate industry and conduct the affairs of the political and social order, the working masses can be depended upon to build a newer and better world, Marxists believe, and one which will provide more abundantly for all.

Some theorists have seriously questioned whether Marxists do not contradict themselves. If authority is vested in the workers, ethically and politically, and if the capacities of the masses warrant the confidence of the Marxists, whence the need for a revolutionary technique? Why the slow growth of the socialist movement? Why the many set-backs? Why the threat of fascism? For these perplexing questions Marxists have an explanation. They contend, and in this regard their premises are again more implicit than explicit, that workers know neither their latent power nor the benefits which would accrue to them under a socialist

society. Carefully nurtured from birth under capitalism, workers have been taught to revere its principles, uphold its traditions, and fight, if necessary, to maintain its institutions. Conversely, they have been indoctrinated against other forms of political and social organizations, particularly socialism, which they regard as a bane. Therefore, Marxists hold, too often their greatest enemies are not the bankers and industrialists who understand socialism (and fear and misrepresent it), but the workers themselves who have fallen prey to allegedly vicious propaganda. Consequently, although political authority resides in the masses, the latter have been slow to make use of it to establish the only kind of society which is by, for, and in their own interest.

Force or Will the Basis of the State? Marxists do not usually pose the question in these terms. For one thing, they reject any Rousseauian conception of a general will transcending individual wills which is capable of being ascertained and which forms the ethical basis of political obedience. They rather tacitly recognize the existence of what some sociologists have called a will for the state.

In the fascist states, political power is acquired by force and deceit. Once obtained, those exercising state power enforce their will at the point of bayonets. If the military props of the regime are withdrawn, the system collapses of its own weight, Marxists hold. Under capitalist democracies, the situation is somewhat different. Here the masses obey the state not because of external coercion but rather because of an inner willingness. Brought up to regard political democracy as a reality, they do not distinguish the form from the fact. Consequently, it is alleged, they acquiesce in and abide by decisions made for them by their elected officials who nominally represent them

but who actually formulate and enforce the will of the ruling class which the masses mistakenly obey for their own.

It is this contradiction between the real and apparent will of the masses which, among other things, implicitly lies at the basis of the conflict between various Marxian factions. Many deny the possibility of a peaceful transformation from capitalism to socialism and urge the absolute necessity for a revolutionary technique because capitalist democracy has succeeded in substituting the illusion of political democracy for the reality of capitalist control.

Despite other disagreements, Marxists are nevertheless in accord that although will rather than force must be the basis of political obedience, only under a socialist society can the general will of all workers be honestly ascertained and carried out.

How Shall Political Power Be Exercised in the New Society?

Blueprints for the socialist society lack the completeness and clarity which many proponents of capitalism have come to expect from those demanding the abolition of the status quo. Although Marxists have minutely diagnosed the ills of capitalism and the causes of its decline, they have been somewhat sketchy about many phases of the society which is to replace it. A notable instance of this is the question of the exercise of political authority in a socialist society, on which subject only scattered references can be found in the writings of Marx, Engels and their successors. In consequence, the scope of authority of, and the limitations upon, the sovereign power, and the purposes and ends it must serve, cannot be set down precisely.

According to the followers of Lenin, after the capture of the capitalist state by the Marxists, a proletarian dictatorship is estab-

lished. This is a transitional era, a "period of revolutionary transformation", politically as well as economically, which lasts for an indefinite period of time and prepares the way for the first stage of a higher society -- Socialism. Politically, the capitalist state is taken over by the proletariat. Even though a workers' state, it is still construed as an instrument of coercion and suppression, but its powers are used against the upholders of the old regime. During this period, the entire populace is absorbed within the proletariat (broadly construed) and the proletariat within the Marxian party. (Merits aside, it is doubtful whether any other political party will be permitted to function during this era.) The democratically elected representatives will exercise the numerous functions hitherto performed by the capitalist state, excluding, of course, those of exploiting and oppressing the proletariat.

Economically, the era is one in which the capitalist economy is transformed into a socialist economy. The means of production are taken over by the new society and socially operated, and the produce distributed and remuneration received on the basis of the work performed.

When the new society has become homogeneous, when class distinctions have disappeared for the most part, when all counter-revolutionary forces have been silenced, the need for any further coercion and suppression disappears. Then, according to the Marxists, the first stage of the new society, the era of Socialism comes into its own. By definition, the state continues to "wither away", since the need no longer exists, for coercion or exploitation of any kind. The economic base laid during the era of "revolutionary transformation" still continues. Workers are accorded equality of opportunity in determining their vocations and

means of livelihood; they still continue to receive wages based upon their productive ability and general utility to the socialist society. But planned economy and the elimination of the profit motive will have made possible an era of abundance and plenty for all: adequate food, shelter and clothing; shorter work week; no unemployment. The general apathy formerly shown by workers to their jobs will no longer exist, Marxists believe. They will now be working for themselves; the greater productive output, the higher the standard of living. Social parasitism and its many ugly concomitants will consequently be abolished.

Politically, the epoch of Socialism is one where there will be a considerable relaxation of restraints hitherto made necessary by the uncertainties attending the transitional era. The state continues to "wither away"; it is replaced in socialist theory by an "administration of things". A genuine workers' democracy now exists wherein the inequalities fostered by the old regime are replaced by strict equality before the law.

The complete destruction of capitalist ideology makes possible the realization of new social values in education; sex, eugenics, marriage and family life; art, science, literature and music. In short, whatever the type of organization necessary during this first stage, Socialism, will be directed towards promoting the aims of the good life. Marxist theoreticians in their formulations are also agreed that the totalitarianism of the Nazi-Fascist state is incompatible with the new society which aims at the liberation rather than the enslavement of the human spirit.

Whether this first stage, designated as Socialism, will last a decade or several centuries, neither Marx nor Engels have committed

themselves. But they look forward to a still higher stage of social organization, Communism, which is to succeed Socialism. This stage, which might more properly be designated as Communist Anarchism, will come when the economic forces will have been most fully and extensively developed and economic goods overabundantly produced. At such a time remuneration will be based not upon production or service to society but upon actual need. "Society will inscribe on its banner: 'From each according to his ability to each according to his needs'."

At this high level of economic development, Marxists hold, the basis for any form of coercion will have completely disappeared. Of class antagonisms there will be none; only harmony will reign among the members of the social order. At this time, it will be possible for all individuals to exercise complete control over themselves, subject to no external restraints; then the Marxian goal will have been completely achieved: anarchism in politics and culture; communism in economics.

Marxists do not hold that at this remote date the dialectic process in society will come to an end; they maintain that it will be transformed from a material to a non-material realm, manifesting itself in such matters as art, literature and science.

Many non-orthodox Marxists have dissented from the general outlines sketchily drawn by Marx, Engels and Lenin. Characterizing the state more abstractly as an agency for maintaining law and order, utilized under capitalism by the dominant class for class domination, they deny that it will "wither away". Rather they hold that under Socialism its functions of exploitation and coercion will disappear, but that the residue which orthodox Marxists refer to as the "administration of things" will still be the state. As for that higher stage, Communism,

they are inclined to dismiss it lightly; they hold that as far as one can anticipate, there seems little likelihood of achieving the Communist-Anarchism envisioned by Marx.

Political Ethics

Justice in the New Society. In their endeavor to establish a new society, Marxists declare they have been largely motivated by a burning desire to eliminate the inequalities and injustices fostered by capitalism. Although the effort to define justice scarcely becomes a problem in Marx, Engels or their successors, in a general way they are concerned with a society in which every man is given his due, to fall back upon a definition at least as old as the Greeks. They deny that society is an entity over and above the individual and that its (society's) ends must be served at the expense of the individual; they likewise deny that the social order exists for the special benefit of a chosen class, such as the capitalists, and that all others may be exploited at will. It is for this reason that they have condemned the capitalist system on ethical grounds; its basis is class justice imposed in the interests of the stronger and concerned with the protection of the property rights of a vested few. They wish to create a social order which will enable every individual to realize his formative powers, and to achieve a place for which his education and inner qualities fit him. Such a society involves, among other things, the elimination of economic exploitation, universality of educational and vocational opportunities, equality before the law, and special privileges, of whatever kind, for none. These values are bound up with a new society, and can be increasingly realized with its growth and development.

Is Class Rule Ever Justified? Although Marxists have condemned political democracy as exploitation and class rule of the bourgeoisie, they are prepared to justify class rule in another form. After the capture of state power by the Marxists, they hold that it is not possible, to institute an equitable society immediately. The period which follows is a transitional one, called by some a workers' democracy and by others a proletarian dictatorship. Although differences exist, Marxists recognize the need for working class domination during this epoch to give permanence and stability to the new regime and to prevent its enemies from disrupting it. But this proletarian class rule, it is argued, is of a temporary nature only; it is instituted by the proletariat for a definite purpose, coming to an end when that purpose has been served, whereas the class rule of the capitalists is perpetual, ever fastening its chains more firmly upon the working class.

Is the Use of Force ever Justified? The manner of transition from capitalism to socialism has divided the Marxists, more as a question of strategy than ethics. Despite their many differences, Marxists have generally distinguished themselves from pacifists; the former have nowhere rejected the thesis that force and violence may be inevitable either in acquiring political power or in retaining it against the attempts of the capitalist class to recapture it. Their differences, discussed more fully as a question of strategy, have mainly centered about the feasibility of using force and violence and the likelihood of successfully acquiring state power by such methods. Among the Leninists, for example, the resort to force and violence (dictatorship of the proletariat) is not only ethically justified but declared to

be strategically inevitable because of the tenacity with which the capitalist class has entrenched itself. Capitalism is likened by them to the Old Man of the Sea who is firmly saddled upon the back of Sinbad; he cannot be persuaded to relinquish his hold; only by more forceful methods can he be dislodged. The followers of Kautsky have condemned force not primarily upon ethical grounds but rather because they believe that strategically it is doomed to failure.

Reconciling Individual Liberty with Social Security. The Marxian theory underlying a reconciliation of individual liberty with social security is clear in the abstract if not in its concrete application. All Marxists are agreed that as much individual liberty must be accorded to workers as is compatible with the security of the new society; that the supreme coercive power of the socialist society must be exercised by representatives of workers, but only to assure safety from external foes and to suppress counter-revolutionary activities. To these ends, individual liberty varies with the relative stability of the new regime. During a transitional era, whether the change has been effected by parliamentary methods or by a forcible overthrow followed by a proletarian dictatorship, restrictions upon individual liberty will be necessary. However, after the regime has attained a greater measure of security, there will be no unnecessary interferences with the individual's liberty and freedom. As a member of a workers' democracy, he will help formulate its political policies; as an economic producer, he will participate in the management of his factory and industry through his membership in a trade union. In both instances his freedom is limited only by the decisions of the majority. But in matters of science, art, music, philosophy, to the extent that

he does not interfere with the liberties of others, he is bound by no codes. Reduced to a terse statement, the relationship of the citizen to his society can be summed up thus: political and economic democracy; cultural anarchism.

The attempted reconciliation of individual liberty with social security in the Soviet Union has given rise to sharply conflicting viewpoints. This controversy will be considered in the concluding chapter.

Individual Liberty and Social Planning. The problem of individual liberty is further complicated during a transitional era by the patent necessity for social planning because Marxists wish to replace the economic chaos of capitalism by an ordered economy. Can this be done without regimentation and without depriving the individual of his right to participate in the formulation of basic policies? Marxists again have no ready answers which cover this question, but they seem agreed that it is possible for a planned economic program to proceed with the sanction of the greater number of members of the society; personal restrictions, if necessary, must be imposed only through democratic methods.

Although the experiences of the Soviet Union in economic planning have been condemned by Marxian opponents of that regime, such critics have not concluded from their condemnation that social planning is incompatible with individual liberty; they have rather held that Stalin and his associates have failed to solve the problem because of their ill-advised, undemocratically-determined measures.

Minority Rights. The problem of minority rights is closely tied up with the question of the bounds of individual liberty. Generally

speaking, the question arises when some substantial number of persons in the social order protest against the exercise of power by the political authority, refuse to be bound by its decisions, and manifest their disagreement in any number of ways: outward obedience coupled with mental reservations; obedience under protest; obedience or disobedience coupled with efforts to undermine the political authority of the sovereign power.

Marxists again have worked out no a priori plan for dealing with this difficulty. Several inferences, however, can be drawn from their approach. In general, the grounds of disobedience and the progressive stage of development of the new society will be the determining factors in dealing with dissenters. During the transitional era, minority political rights will be sharply curtailed. Those who are opposed to the principles of the regime -- capitalist elements of one kind or another -- can expect little tolerance, Marxists hold. If they persist in their opposition, they will in all probability be summarily disposed of as counter-revolutionists. The fate of those in disagreement with the strategy and tactics but not the general principles of the established order is a moot point. In times of crises, political distinctions of principles versus strategy and tactics have not always been scrupulously observed. There is a likelihood, then, again according to the Marxists, that minority disagreements even on such questions may be suppressed.

When the transitional era is at an end, and the threats to the stability of the regime have been reasonably eliminated, the problem of minority rights is likely to take on a somewhat different aspect. Marxists, of course, would still prohibit advocacy of capitalist restoration. Since they believe that the class basis of society will have been elimina-

ted, the need for the use of coercion against members of the new society is not likely to exist. But they have not committed themselves on whether there will still continue to be any political party or parties as such, and whether opposition parties will be permitted to have a legal existence. If precedent carries any weight or significance, it should be noted that in the Soviet Union, where the first stage of Socialism has been proclaimed and where, it is declared, the most democratic constitution in the world has been established, the legality of the Communist party alone is recognized. Against this solution many Marxists have protested.

Means and Ends. On the question of means and ends, there is little in Marx or Engels to form the basis for any well-defined position or policy. Marxists therefore seem divided upon the question of a code of proletarian ethics. Many believe that ends justify means, and that dishonesty and deceit are permissible even to other workers and Marxists to the extent that these methods can be made to serve alleged ethical ends. The exoneration of many of the alleged questionable practices of Stalin by his followers has been based on the allegation that, at worst, the means employed have been more than vindicated by the ends achieved. Many Marxists have nevertheless rejected this alleged practice of proletarian Machiavellianism and have declared, with the non-Marxist, Aldous Huxley, that such means tend to become confused with the ends themselves, and very largely determine those ends.

A celebrated example involving this question is the Stalin-Trotsky controversy. Anyone who reads the Stalin and the Trotsky versions of the relations of each with Lenin very soon becomes convinced that either or both are deliberately falsifying in whole or in part, for in

numerous instances the alleged statements of fact flatly and completely contradict each other. The rationale for such a practice clearly falls within the "end justifies the means" category.

Political Strategy

The problems of strategy enumerated in the early section of this chapter form the basis of the greater part of this study, because it is upon these questions that the Marxian political parties have shown their greatest disagreement. No attempt will be made here to present all the problems; these are taken up in the main body of the book.

Strategy and Tactics. Starting with the fundamental principles of Marxism as expounded in the writings of the founders, Marxian political movements hold that they must attempt to win over a substantial following before it is possible to carry their programs into effect. The policies pursued towards this end are designated as strategy and tactics.

The two concepts are fundamentally different, although in actual practice there does not seem to be any clear line of demarcation between them. The former concerns itself with those underlying general policies which must be pursued in order to advance the political movement in numbers, strength and influence. The latter, on the other hand, deals with those day-to-day activities necessary to implement the general line of strategy.

Basis of Marxian Strategy. The strategy and tactics of the Marxists are essential outgrowths of their philosophy, and social and economic theory. According to their conceptions, dialectical materialism in its application to human society (historical materialism) makes clear that history is the unfolding of endless conflict between two warring

classes, one exploiting and the other exploited. whose antagonisms are based upon the former's control of the means of production; that social change results from the conflicts of these classes. Under capitalism, these relations are controlled by the capitalists who constitute the dominant class which exploits the working class and lives on the "surplus value" created by the latter. Marxian strategy and tactics are therefore aimed at the following: making the exploited class conscious of its history and status; establishing in the minds of workers the need for a new social order; preparing workers for the role they are to play in the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of a classless society. Thus, according to the Marxists, their system of sociology implicitly discloses a program of action; strategy and tactics become policies and techniques for extending the class struggle.

Fundamental Problems: Obtaining Political Power. Marxists are unanimous in holding that the transformation of capitalism into socialism cannot be accomplished without first obtaining state power. On this question, there is a sharp cleavage of opinion, on the basis of which many secondary differences have developed. One school of thought, following Kautsky, inclines to the view that socialism can be peacefully ushered in through the technique of the ballot box; that when Marx spoke of revolution, he regarded it as the goal, but not necessarily the means. The other school, adhering to the pattern laid out by Lenin, has denied that a new society can be built within the framework of the old; that only by forcibly destroying and overthrowing the capitalist state can a new society emerge. In short, revolution is not merely the end but the very technique for acquiring power to build the socialist

society.

Both groups agree, however, that Marxism, regardless of its technique, cannot come to power through a putsch organized by a minority. Such uprisings have been condemned as Blanquism. Marxists hold that a socialist movement is bound to fail unless backed by a substantial section of the populace, with no consequential opposition from the rest of the working class. They therefore regard it as their duty to unite the workers and farmers under the leadership of a proletarian vanguard and win over the support of the middle class (which, they hold is being steadily ground down into the ranks of the working class) to its program. These three groups joined constitute a working majority which can effect a successful revolution.

Despite their determination to achieve socialism by popular support and acquiescence, Marxists nevertheless concede that when the crucial struggle to obtain or retain political power arises, the strong and effective opposition mustered by the capitalist class may make their activities seem to be those of a minority group.

Although in disagreement regarding the road to Socialist power, both Marxian factions are in complete accord that the wresting of control from the bourgeoisie is the "final conflict", the revolution which will end all revolutions. Thereafter subsequent social changes will be gradual and evolutionary in character, involving no other fundamental change in the political and social structure.

Tactics. Marxists have endeavored to reach workers in factories, farms and offices, and have sought to entrench themselves in trade unions and in mass organizations generally. They have also attempted to enlist those sections of the middle class whose foundations are not

deeply rooted in the capitalist system or whose status has become insecure. In each of the mass organizations (A.F.L., C.I.O., Workers Alliance, W.P.A. Unions) they have constituted themselves, as far as their numbers have permitted, into separate fractions which meet regularly for the purpose of deciding the policies they wish to propose to the general membership. They have often used these organizations as spring-boards for the introduction of motions and resolutions espoused by their respective political organizations. They have also endeavored to win over to membership in their political movement those members of the trade union vanguard who have been made acutely class-conscious and who have come under their influence.

Special attention has been paid by all Marxian parties and organizations to winning over Negroes and youth to their cause. Marxists believe that the exploitation of the Negro is far greater than that of his white fellow-worker, and, consequently, class-consciousness can be awakened more quickly. They also consider youth as a period in which the evils and injustices of capitalism can easily be demonstrated, the ideals for a new social order inculcated, and the foundation laid for membership in the youth section of the party.

Political Organization

Marxian political parties, despite important differences, have some elements of identity with the major American political parties. Each is a permanent body whose organization is guided by a written constitution (in most cases) which sets forth its principles, conditions of membership, dues, etc. The highest authority in the party is generally the party convention, usually held bi-annually. In the interim, each organization is governed by a duly constituted National Executive

Committee, empowered to act for the Party between conventions.

The full strength of Marxian organizations cannot in most instances be judged by their book membership. In addition to actual party membership each commands a diversified, sympathetic peripheral fringe which will vote its ticket, contribute to its campaign funds, sign its petitions, endorse its resolutions or support its motions in cultural, consumer, trade union or other mass organizations.

According to their statements, party policies are democratically determined by the party membership. Issues are brought up for discussion at different branches, sections or units of the party. The policies of the majority become the policies of the party, binding upon all. Party discipline is by far stricter than in the major parties, although great variations are to be found; "monolithic" parties adhere to more rigid conceptions of discipline, while "all-inclusive" type of parties allow considerably greater leeway.

Unlike the major parties whose membership (at least prior to the issues created by the New Deal) has been largely of a geographic and a sectional nature, the basis of membership of the Marxian parties is, for the most part, economic. Their following is confined primarily to the proletarian, white-collar and intellectual elements concentrated in the trade unions and mass organizations of the large cities. Although Marxian parties desire to have a predominance of genuine rank-and-file city proletariat and farm workers, it is no secret that in many cases the membership and leadership, while not overwhelmingly of intellectual and middle class extraction, are predominantly such. The sharp decline in employment opportunities for professional and white-collar workers has convinced many of them of the bankruptcy and inadequacy of the

capitalist system and has driven them into the ranks of the Marxists in large numbers.

Again unlike the major political parties which make an actual bid for power regularly at the polls, most Marxian groups have no faith in the efficacy of the parliamentary technique; those few which have entered candidates at the polls have perhaps cherished the hope of winning a local election here and there. Generally, however, the Marxian parties have functioned as propaganda and pressure groups; in the main their tactics have been to raise a program of immediate demands aimed at giving leadership to workers and farmers in their day-to-day struggles against the obstacles created by the present system. In this way Marxists hope to show them its inadequacies and train them for their role in the struggle for power when, during a war or an acute economic crisis, the capitalist system breaks down. Consequently, their party platforms and programs, unlike those of the major parties whose planks are generally vague and evasive, are vigorous, unequivocal and outspoken against the status quo.

Considerable differences between organizational theory and practice, involving such problems as party democracy, bureaucracy and factionalism will be discussed in the concluding section.

CHAPTER I

THE CONTROVERSY OVER MARX¹

An unorientated reader who casually thumbs the pages of this book is likely to express utter amazement at the diverse number of Marxian political movements which have sprung up. It will soon seem very obvious to him that although Marxism may be a fighting social philosophy uniting theory and practice for the purpose of overthrowing capitalism and establishing a new social order, the followers of Marx are far from united on either theory or practice.

A number of reasons can be offered, tentatively, to explain this. (1) First of all, Marx wrote prolifically, over a long period of years. Many of his theories underwent an evolutionary development in the course of his own lifetime. Again, many of his statements lack clarity and are ambiguous. It has not always been possible to say with certainty exactly what Marx meant. In consequence, different explanations have been given for many of his leading doctrines.

(2) Since the death of Marx, new factors, political and economic, have arisen which could not possibly have been foreseen by him, some of his followers allege. And again, others have pointed out, some of his predictions have not come to pass. Such contentions have resulted in the "extension" of Marx on the one hand, and the "revision" of Marx on the other (the former represented by Lenin and the latter by Bernstein).

(3) A third factor of great significance is the question of strategy and tactics. Granted, for example, that one has found the correct Marxian theory

¹The material offered in this chapter is strictly introductory and incidental. It has been presented in many forms by many writers. No claims of originality or completeness are made. For further details the reader is urged to consult the bibliography found in these footnotes.

of the state, what steps must be taken to overthrow capitalism and establish a socialist society? What role does the political party play? What role must be assigned to the trade union? What shall the nature of the state be during the transitional era from capitalism to a socialist society? Such questions, too, have divided the followers of Marx and have resulted in different political alignments.

(4) Finally, still another reason has been advanced which some Marxists are reluctant to accept. Many of the differences existing between different Marxian political groups do not seem very significant. The struggle to control and dominate a political party, the desire for power and political leadership often result in the creation of arbitrary differences or the accentuation of minor ones in order to become or remain the ruling bureaucracy.

Thus the conflict of personalities and vested interests seem to play some part in the alignment of forces among the Marxists in the United States, as well as among Democrats and Republicans. This, in any event, seems to be the undisputed testimony of many persons who have been associated with numerous Marxian political parties in this country.

Marx's Interpreters.¹ Many "schools" of Marxism, and likewise many interpreters and commentators have appeared upon the scene during the life of Marx and especially after his death. There is neither a commonly accepted interpretation of Marx, or even a universally recognized body of Marxian doctrines, among his professed followers. Some of his doctrines appear to be generally accepted by them all, but when their implications have been more closely examined, great differences have arisen. Other theories have been outrightly rejected as non-Marxian by some of his professed followers. Still others have been repudiated on grounds that, although they are undisputably

¹For a general survey of Marx's interpreters by writers with different viewpoints, see: Laidler, History of Socialist Thought, pp. 295-348. Hook, Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx, pp. 18-63. Strachey, The Theory and Practice of Socialism, pp. 442-459. Fainsod, International Socialism and the World War, pp. 6-15.

Marxian, the general system of Marxism could be served better by some alternative doctrine.²

The following are the more important figures whose interpretations of Marx have had important political consequences: Karl Kautsky, Eduard Bernstein, Daniel De Leon, V. I. Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg, and Georges Sorel. (It is important to note that in many instances their followers have had serious disagreements which have led to further schisms.)

Any attempt to recount the battles waged by the "Orthodox" Marxist followers of Kautsky³ against the "Revisionists" led by Bernstein,⁴ and the onslaughts made against both by Lenin⁵ and Luxemburg,⁶ would carry this study far afield. Not all the problems raised would be quite relevant to a study of contemporary Marxian political movements, however interesting and important.

²For a comprehensive presentation of Marx's doctrines, again by writers with different viewpoints, see: Hook, op. cit., pp. 73-321. Strachey, op. cit., 371-485. Laidler, op. cit., pp. 149-210. Cole, What Marx Really Meant, passim. Beer, The Life and Teaching of Karl Marx, pp. 94-151. Lenin, The Teachings of Karl Marx, passim. Laski, Karl Marx: An Essay, passim. (References directly to the works of Marx and Engels will be found in the bibliographies contained in these books.)

³Kautsky, The Social Revolution; The Road to Power; The Labor Revolution. Sachs, Basic Principles of Scientific Socialism. Boudin, Theoretical System of Karl Marx.

⁴Bernstein, Evolutionary Socialism.

⁵Lenin, State and Revolution; The Proletarian Revolution and Renegade Kautsky.

⁶Luxemburg, Reform or Revolution.

One, however, the Marxian theory of the state, must be singled out because it furnishes the clue to an understanding of what follows in the succeeding pages.

The Marxian Theory of the State.¹ It is an unfortunate truth that neither Marx nor Engels wrote any single comprehensive treatise presenting their theories of the nature of the state under capitalism, the conquest of political power by the working class, the transitional state from capitalism to socialism and the ultimate nature of political control when the classless society has been achieved. Only fragmentary statements and isolated paragraphs are to be found,² from which different inferences and conflicting interpretations have been made.

Marxists are more or less in agreement upon the basic role the state has hitherto played, and its function under capitalism. They regard the state as an instrument of exploitation and oppression, utilized by the dominant economic class in any given order of society to keep in subjection the vast majority of persons living in that social order, for the purpose of maintaining intact the existing class-property and other economic relations. Under modern capitalism particularly, Marxists allege, the state constantly bends every effort to maintain the status quo, with an inevitable coercion, oppression and exploitation of workers and farmers in behalf of the capitalist class which owns the basic natural resources and the instruments of production. In order to establish a new social order, distinguished above all by the absence of classes (i.e., the classless society), it is necessary to destroy the capitalist state.³

¹For general surveys, see: Chang, The Marxian Theory of the State, passim. Laski, Communism, pp. 123-182. Cole, op. cit., pp. 177-205. Strachey, op. cit., pp. 182-206.

²For a list of references where such passages can be found, the reader is referred to the footnotes of Chang, op. cit., especially pp. 46-66.

³See previous two footnotes.

After having traversed thus far together, Marxists take two sharply divergent roads at this point. The crux of the matter is this: How is the bourgeois-capitalist state to be overthrown? At the polls? Or on the barricades? The answer to this question has been one of the most important bases of cleavage within the Marxist movement. The followers of Kautsky, Bernstein and De Leon have answered the question one way; those of Lenin, Luxemburg and Sorel, the other.

The non-Revolution Technique for the Conquest of Power.¹ Although the battle between orthodox Marxism (Kautsky) and revisionism (Bernstein) raged furiously for several decades, it is nevertheless interesting to observe that both schools of thought ultimately arrived more or less at the same conclusion on the question of the "road to power": a peaceful conquest of the capitalist state.

Bernstein was an ardent proponent of social evolution and the "inevitability of gradualness". He made little pretense of "social revolution" but rather believed that Marxists should concentrate more upon social legislation; the goal, to be sure, was a socialist society, but it would come as the resultant of social reform. Any notion about Marxism involving the mounting of barricades seemed foreign to his central tendency.²

Kautsky, on the other hand, constantly spoke of the need for "social revolution" as contrasted with piecemeal reform; but what he seemed to have in mind was not so much the technique for achieving the socialist society as its ultimate goal, the shifting of power from one class to another. Although he was willing to use more drastic measures than Bernstein, yet he too hoped for a working class victory at the polls. His differences with Bernstein were not great enough to bring about a split in the Social Democratic movement

¹Hillquit, From Marx to Lenin, passim; Socialism in Theory and Practice, pp. 89-143. Kautsky, The Social Revolution, passim; The Road to Power, passim. Vandervelde, Socialism versus the State, passim.

²Bernstein, op. cit.

when the latter was under the domination of the followers of Bernstein.³ Kautsky's writings after the Russian Revolution marked him as an ardent foe of Leninism, particularly of the Bolshevik conception of the dictatorship of the proletariat.⁴

In any event, the followers of Kautsky and Bernstein found themselves working side by side in the American Socialist party. Other differences aside, they were united in advocating the parliamentary road to a socialist society in the United States. When the Old Guard Socialists bolted the leftward-moving Socialist party in 1936, the followers of Kautsky and Bernstein were among those who left and joined the Social Democratic Federation. By that time they no longer sharply distinguished themselves as such within the movement.

Daniel De Leon, credited with being one of the pioneer Marxists in the United States, has offered another interpretation of the road to power. Like Kautsky, his writings stress "social revolution", but to him, too, revolution is not the means but the goal. He has envisaged a peaceful conquest by the American proletariat at the polls, after which all functions of political, social and economic power are passed on to the Industrial Union which has been organized and prepared to take over power and carry on.⁵ The followers of De Leon are to be found today in the Socialist Labor party and the Industrial Union party.

The Revolutionary Technique for the Conquest of Power.¹ Lenin proved to be an adamant foe of evolutionary socialism and the parliamentary technique

³The stand of Kautsky's followers on the war question in 1914 is most illuminating. See Fainsod, op. cit., pp. 14-15.

⁴Kautsky, Bolshevism at a Deadlock, passim; Communism and Socialism, passim.

⁵Further details are found in the chapter on the Socialist Labor party.

¹Lenin, State and Revolution, passim. Luxemburg, op. cit., pp. 41-47.

for the conquest of power. He alleged that a peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism, by the very nature of the former, was impossible; capitalists would never voluntarily surrender political or economic power without a sharp struggle, he contended.

He held that when objective conditions for revolution were ripe (a disorganized government, a disloyal army and a revolutionary working class), the Communist party, under competent revolutionary leadership, would seize control of the bourgeois state, oust its leaders and establish a dictatorship of the proletariat. This proletarian dictatorship would be empowered to use force and coercion not against the working class, but its enemies; it would suppress all counter-revolutionary activity of the capitalists and would serve as a transitional agency to a socialist society. This dictatorship would be the first stage of the new society and would prepare the way for the higher stage where all forms of external coercion would disappear, the state would have withered away, and the final goal envisaged by Marx (from each according to his ability to each according to his needs) would be reached.² It is this theory of the state which is the distinguishing characteristic of Marxism-Leninism. It was one of the most important factors in the formation of the Third International.

Another important Marxist who rejected the parliamentary road to power was Rosa Luxemburg. Although she developed important differences with Lenin³ she nevertheless shared his convictions on the inefficacy of the methods of Kautsky and his followers. (Unlike Lenin, she favored the spontaneous general strike rather than a planned uprising as the technique for capturing state power; she also distrusted too great a concentration of power in the

²Lenin, op. cit., pp. 7-20.

³Luxemburg, Leninism and Marxism, passim. Hook, op. cit., pp. 60-62. Fainsod, op. cit., pp. 12-13.

hands of the Bolshevik party and favored greater participation by workers outside the party; her analysis of imperialism led her to believe that capitalism would collapse of its own accord when further imperialist expansion was not possible, contrary to what Lenin held; she also tended to discourage the support of colonial uprisings as reactionary gestures of nationalism which were impossible of success under conditions of modern imperialism.) Strictly speaking, no important political movement has developed to date from the theoretical formulations of Rosa Luxemburg. But she has been somewhat influential among the members of the Groups of Council Communists⁴ and non-affiliated Marxists.

Finally, the position of Georges Sorel requires a passing consideration. A prominent Marxist for many years, he completely rejected the parliamentary or reformist road to power. He held that the capitalist system would have to be forcibly smashed. His emphasis on violence, his advocacy of the general strike, and his rejection of the political party as a factor in bringing the new social order into being have earned him the reputation of being one of the founders of syndicalism, which is generally distinguished from Marxism.⁵ The political movement in the United States which most nearly coincides with the doctrines of Sorel is the Industrial Workers of the World.

This account briefly presents the framework for the later conflicts and controversies among Marxists. Many of these conflicts, however, have centered around new issues resulting from changes in political, social and economic conditions.

⁴Discussed infra.

⁵Sorel, Reflections on Violence, passim. MacDonald, Syndicalism, pp. 16-23. Hook, op. cit., pp. 44-52. Laidler, op. cit., pp. 378-381.

CHAPTER II

THE STALIN-TROTSKY CONTROVERSY: STALIN'S VERSION.¹

The Problem. The controversy between Stalin and Trotsky over who inherited Lenin's mantle is one of the most bitter in the history of the radical movement. In comparison, all others pale into utter significance; even the celebrated battle between the forces of Marx and Bakunin which rocked the First International to its very core and ultimately resulted in its transfer to the American soil (where it died a peaceful death) gets a poor second rating. By this time, many believe, fact and forgery have become so hopelessly bound up with each other that an objective judgment on the facts is practically impossible. For the only undisputed fact is that there are two versions of the truth: Stalin's and Trotsky's.

Although an attempt will be made to state the contentions of both sides fairly, this writer realizes how difficult it is to present an entirely objective picture. At best, he hopes this study will serve as an introduction to, rather than a definitive statement of, the conflicting claims of the Stalinists and the Trotskyists. Unless the reader is already a partisan of either group (in which case he will be inclined to regard his own side as understated), what follows should give him a bird's-eye view of the issues involved and something of a background against which to posit the more involved discussions found in the writings of Stalin, Trotsky and their followers.

The bone of contention between the rival heirs of Lenin is basically one of principled difference on the issue of whether Lenin advocated the theory of

¹This chapter should be read in conjunction with the Communist party's criticism of Trotsky, infra.

"permanent (continuous) revolution" or whether he believed in "socialism in one country" first. The former viewpoint is Trotskyism, the latter, Stalinism (although each group prefers to call it Leninism and identify that label with its own cause). There are other issues involved, but this is the founthead from which almost all other differences flow.

It is important to recognize that the effort of each to convince is not merely based on reason alone, but on authority as well. Each contestant quotes from the same revolutionary sources (Lenin); each stoutly maintains not alone that his principles are sounder in the great task of bringing socialism to mankind, but that Lenin himself expounded and stood for these very principles.

As a secondary issue, although both deny it,² the controversy seems to many to be a drawn conflict between two dynamic personalities, each intent upon ruling the roost and holding undisputed sway. To what extent this issue is significant, the reader must decide for himself after a careful examination of all available literature.

The case each builds up follows identical lines. Each shows: how cordial his relations were with Lenin during the latter's lifetime, and how closely they agreed in principle; how Lenin disagreed most fundamentally and often violently with the relator's adversary and never hesitated to so express himself; how the present contestants were constantly at odds during the lifetime of Lenin who invariably sided with the relator; how the relator's adversary has falsified Russian history to make the facts conform with his own version of the truth.

It cannot too strongly be emphasized that in the two versions of the Stalin-Trotsky controversy here presented, all statements are to be taken simply as the allegations of the respective viewpoints of Stalin and Trotsky.

² Stalin, Leninism, Vol. I, p. 377. Trotsky, Stalinism and Bolshevism, pp. 25-26.

Many of the contentions obviously contradict each other. This writer cannot vouch for their truth but only for a reasonably objective picture of what each regards as the truth.

Stalin's Version of His Relations with Lenin

It is the contention of Stalin (and his followers) that he, and not Trotsky (the latter's allegation to the contrary notwithstanding), was Lenin's best disciple and the one in whom Lenin placed his chief reliance for the continuation of his policies and traditions.

"... Stalin was Lenin's best disciple, his most loyal aid, and Stalin's present policies and leading group of co-workers are the historical continuation of Lenin's policies and leadership."¹

Stalin's followers have further maintained that beginning in 1903 there developed a friendship between Lenin and Stalin; that in the ensuing years they jointly passed through many trials which further heightened their collaboration and brought them politically closer together; that only Lenin's death brought an end to this great friendship and political association from which the world proletariat reaped such a rich harvest.²

"The lives and struggle of Lenin and Stalin are inseparably blended and interwoven. Over the course of decades, Lenin and Stalin always advanced together, shoulder to shoulder. Jointly they established our Party and forged it on the anvil of great tests; jointly they crushed the enemy and led the Party to the victories of the great proletarian socialist revolution."³

"Despite all obstacles, Lenin and Stalin found ways and means of maintaining contacts, of meeting each other, of jointly building the Party and completely routing its enemies--the Judas Trotsky and his myrmidons, the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries--and preparing the working people for the coming battles."³

¹Foster, Questions and Answers on the Platakov-Radek Trial, p. 27.

²N. Rubinstein, "A Great Friendship", The Communist International (May 1938), Vol. XV, No. 5, pp. 476-486 (Part I); The Communist International (June 1938), Vol. XV, No. 6, pp. 583-594 (Part II).

³Rubinstein, op. cit., Part I, p. 476.

"Thus it was, to the very last days of Lenin's life, and over a period of almost twenty-five years, that the life and struggle of Lenin were interwoven with the life and struggle of his comrade-in-arms, Comrade Stalin, the great perpetuator of Lenin's cause."⁴

"The best comrade-in-arms of Lenin, the brilliant perpetuator of his cause, Comrade Stalin, teaches the Party, the Soviet people, and all working people to follow the path of Lenin and fulfill his behests. Stalin's vow made over Lenin's grave has become the vow of millions, the solemn pledge of loyalty to Lenin's banner."⁵

On the other hand, Lenin's relations with Trotsky, according to the version of Stalin, (as will presently be shown) were decidedly antagonistic and hostile prior to the Russian Revolution. At the inception of this great event, they briefly co-operated, only to be drawn further apart by the important theoretical differences which separated them and which ever continued to loom larger and larger.⁶

If Stalin seemed to be less in the limelight during those critical revolutionary years than Trotsky (and others), it was not because he was eclipsed by their greater importance nor because of any disagreements with Lenin, the followers of Stalin have declared; it can be explained simply by the fact that an organizer is less frequently known than a writer or an agitator.

"Why did the workers in the years of the great revolution hear more of Trotsky, Radek and Zinoviev than of Stalin, Voroshilov and Molotov? Trotsky, Radek and Zinoviev were writers and agitators; they made big speeches and wrote big articles. Stalin, Voroshilov and Molotov were organizers, master builders of the Party, who wrought more by deed than by word, who supported Lenin day by day without claiming the limelight of international publicity. The writers and agitators are always more in the

⁴Rubinstein, op. cit., Part II, p. 594

⁵Idem.

⁶Foster, Questions and Answers on the Piatakov-Radek Trial, p. 18.

public eye than the devoted leaders of the Party to whom falls all the burden of the work; in politics, as in the theater, the actor frequently enjoys more popularity than the author and stage manager. . . ."7

Prior to 1905. Stalin has narrated that his knowledge and approval of Lenin's revolutionary activities went back to the end of the eightennineties, but that he became fully convinced of Lenin's greatness only after the publication of Iskra in 1901.¹

Stalin has further said that although he did not make the personal acquaintance of Lenin until December, 1905², from 1903 until that date he carried on a correspondence with the latter which disclosed the identity of their views, characterized foremost by a relentless struggle against Menshevism.³

After his first escape from Siberia in 1904, he became the leader of the Caucasian Bolsheviks who were Lenin's most stalwart supporters, Stalin has declared. As a result, he received special commendation from Lenin at the Party's Third Congress.⁴

"It is not surprising that^{at} the Third Congress of the Party Lenin in his draft resolution, later accepted by the Congress, pointed out specifically that regarding the events in the Caucasus, the 'special conditions of social and political life in the Caucasus favored the establishment there of the most militant organization of our Party!'"⁵

Upheaval of 1905. The Revolution of 1905 found both Lenin and Stalin away from the revolutionary center of Petrograd.

" . . . Lenin led the work of the Party first from abroad and then returned to Russia at the very height of the revolutionary events. Comrade Stalin was rousing the working class and peasantry of the Transcaucasian

⁷Fischer, Trotsky Unmasked, p. 16.

¹Rubinstein, op. cit., Part I, p. 477.

²Ibid., p. 478.

³Ibid., p. 477.

⁴Ibid., p. 478.

⁵Idem.

region to the fight against the tsarist regime."¹

During this period, Stalin has alleged, Lenin and he gave each other mutual support in their common aims. Stalin, as editor of Struggle of the Proletariat wrote, "The Third Congress Before the Court of the Caucasian Mensheviks"; Lenin as editor of the Proletarii wrote, "The Third Congress". Each republished the article of the other.²

About the same time, moreover, Stalin wrote "On Party Differences" and "Reply to a Social Democrat". Both articles, it is maintained, not only accorded with the ideas of Lenin's "What Is To Be Done?" but actually constituted an effective answer to Trotsky's "Our Political Tasks", characterized by the Stalinists as a "vile booklet" and a "slander" of Lenin's "What Is To Be Done?".³

1905-1917. From 1905 to 1917, Stalin has declared that his activities were of such a nature as to draw him closer and closer to Lenin, whose position he most staunchly supported and defended against the onslaughts of Flekhanov, Dan, Trotsky, Kamenev, Zinoviev, Rykov and others.¹

On Lenin's proposal, declares Stalin, at the Prague Conference of the Bolshevik Party, he was elected to head a small bureau of the Central Committee. This "Central Group", as it was known, ". . . played a colossal role in consolidating the Bolshevik organizations and in bringing about an advance in the Party's work."²

In 1913, Stalin was exiled (for the sixth time) to Turukhansk, where he

¹Idem.

²Idem.

³Idem.

¹Ibid., pp. 478-484.

²Ibid., p. 480.

remained some four years, arriving in Petrograd in March 1917.³ During this period, he corresponded with Lenin, warmly applauding Lenin's policies.⁴

" . . . Lenin fought a ruthless struggle against the social chauvinists, routed Trotsky, Bukharin, Pyatakov, the double-dealing Zinoviev, the cowardly opportunist Kamenev. . . ."⁵

"In his remote exile Turukhansk, at the very Polar Circle, Comrade Stalin raised high the Leninist banner. . . ."⁶

The October, 1917, Revolution. After the February 1917 revolution, Stalin set out for Petrograd from Turukhansk. En route he telegraphed to Lenin his "fraternal greetings". Prior to Lenin's arrival, " . . . Comrade Stalin conducted a relentless struggle against the enemies of Lenin's line--Kamenev, the Trotskyites, Rykov."¹

When Lenin arrived at the Finland Station in Petrograd, Stalin alighted with him, having boarded the train at Byelooostrov. From that time to Lenin's death, Stalin has declared, they worked together in complete harmony. Against heavy odds, they led the Party and the Russian workers towards the second revolution, the revolution for socialism.² Even when Lenin was forced to flee for his life to Finland from the Kerensky regime, it was Stalin who kept him in touch with the Bolshevik party.³

³Ibid., pp. 483-484.

⁴Ibid., p. 483.

⁵Idem.

⁶Ibid., p. 484.

¹Idem.

²Idem. Stalin, The History of the Civil War in the U. S. S. R., Vol. I, Ch. III-XV.

³Rubinstein, op. cit., Part I, p. 484.

"At the Seventh (April) Conference, Lenin and Stalin together defeated the treacherous policy of Kamenev, Pyatakov, Rykov, and directed the Party towards the objective of the bourgeois-democratic revolution developing into a socialist revolution."⁴

"At the most decisive moments, Stalin was at Lenin's side. Such was also the case in the July days of 1917 when Comrade Stalin led the movement on behalf of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party.

"In these days Comrade Stalin saved Lenin's life for the Party, for the people, for the whole mankind. Comrade Stalin sharply opposed the treacherous demands of Trotsky, Rykov and Kamenev who insisted upon giving Lenin up to the bestial counter-revolution."⁵

"Comrade Stalin who organized Lenin's existence underground maintained contact with him all the time and kept him informed of the political situation With enormous force and depth, Comrade Stalin defended the Leninist viewpoint, crushing Bukharin and Preobrazensky who attempted to smuggle in Trotsky's "theory" about the impossibility of the victory of socialism in one country."⁶

When Lenin returned from Finland, shortly thereafter, Stalin met him and discussed with him the political situation. It was at Stalin's behest, moreover, that ". . . Lenin's resolution on the armed uprising was adopted."⁷

Stalin has further narrated that Lenin and he were the leading lights of the October revolution which overthrew the Kerensky regime and resulted in the rise to power of the Bolshevik party; and that both were elected by the Central Committee to membership in the "General Staff of the October Revolution".⁸

"Thus it was that at the decisive moment the call of the leaders of the great proletarian socialist revolution, Lenin and Stalin, rang out from the pages of the central organ of the Bolshevik Party.

"Lenin and Stalin jointly undertook the direct guidance of the October battles, organized the routing of Kerensky and Krasnov. It is well known that at one of the decisive moments, Lenin and Stalin came to the military-revolutionary committee and demanded complete subordination to the instructions of the Central Committee in the leading operations against Krasnov. At the turning point that decided the fate of the revolution, Lenin and

⁴Idem.

⁵Ibid., pp. 484-485.

⁶Ibid., p. 485.

⁷Ibid., p. 486.

⁸Idem.

Stalin jointly made responsible decisions. . . ."9

"In these difficult and menacing days, it was only the supreme wisdom and unshakable steadfastness of Lenin and Stalin, the leadership of Lenin and Stalin, that determined the victory of the working people."10

"The most important documents of the Soviet government were drawn up and signed jointly by Lenin and Stalin. . . ."11

The further collaboration between Lenin and Stalin (to the exclusion of, and in opposition to Trotsky) as narrated by the followers of Stalin, cannot be traced in greater detail here.¹² Their basic doctrinal agreements, however, will be briefly indicated.

Stalin has declared that his thorough agreement with Lenin on the solution to the following fundamental questions confronting the Bolshevik Party has substantiated his claim as Lenin's true successor; the cessation of war with the Entente Powers; the building of socialism in one country; the military conduct of the civil war; the peasant question; the national question; the N. E. P.

Brest-Litovsk. When the problem of concluding peace with Germany arose, and under what terms, Lenin and Stalin, united under a single plan of peace, compelled Trotsky at Brest-Litovsk to conclude the war, even at terms claimed to be disadvantageous. " 'Either a breathing space or the Revolution is ruined', declared Comrade Stalin."1

"All the important telegrams dispatched to Brest-Litovsk designed to break Trotsky's sabotage, which was so fatal for the Revolution, were sent in the names of Lenin and Stalin. Lenin conferred with Comrade Stalin on all questions upon which the fate of the young Soviet Republic depended."2

Socialism in One Country.¹ Stalin has maintained that his thesis of "socialism in one country", as contrasted with Trotsky's "permanent revolution",

⁹Idem.

¹⁰Rubinstein, op. cit., Part II, p. 583.

¹¹Idem.

¹²Rubinstein, op. cit., Part II, pp. 583-594.

¹Ibid., p. 585.

²Idem.

¹This thesis is developed at greater length in the chapter on the Communist

was Lenin's own doctrine which he (Stalin) has continued to follow.² Communists quote corroborative evidence for this viewpoint from Lenin.

" 'Uneven economic and political development is an absolute law of capitalism. /Our emphasis--M. J. O./ Hence the victory of Socialism is possible first in a few or even in one single capitalist country taken separately. The victorious proletariat of that country, having expropriated the capitalists and organized its own Socialist production, would rise against the rest of the capitalist world, attract to itself the oppressed classes of other countries, raise revolts among them against the capitalists, and in the event of necessity come out even with armed force against the exploiting classes and their states.' For 'the free federation of nations in Socialism is impossible without a more or less prolonged and stubborn struggle of the Socialist republics against the backward States.' (V. I. Lenin, Collected Works, Russian Edition, Vol. XVIII, p. 232-3.)"³

Military Conduct of the Civil War.¹ It has been the contention of Stalin's followers that he and not Trotsky was the real leader and military genius of the Red Army in its desperate fight to crush counter-revolution.

Voroshilov has maintained that Stalin's role as an army organizer has been somewhat slighted and overlooked because of the other innumerable activities in which he was involved, but that belated recognition is his due.

" . . . In the last five or six years Comrade Stalin has stood in the very centre of the surging struggle. Only these circumstances can explain why the role of Comrade Stalin as one of the foremost organizers of the victories of the Civil War has been to some extent overlooked and has not yet received its due appreciation."²

Stalin began his military career in a most fortuitous manner. Sent to Tsaritsin (now Stalingrad) with an army unit as commissioner of food supplies,

Party's criticism of Trotskyism, infra.

²Foster, Questions and Answers on the Platakov-Radek Trial, p. 9.

³Olgin, Trotskyism-Counter-Revolution in Disguise, p. 31. Stalin, Leninism, Vol. I, pp. 114-115.

¹Voroshilov, Stalin and the Red Army, passim.

²Voroshilow, op. cit., p. 5.

he so distinguished himself by his capacity for organization, his followers have alleged, that he was quickly placed at the head of the Revolutionary Military Council for Tsaritsin.³

Stalin's success in reorganizing the Red Army on this front brought him into open conflict with Trotsky. At one time Trotsky sent his orders to that region in the form of a telegram, Communists assert. "Stalin wrote a categorical and significant superscript on this telegram: 'To be disregarded.' "⁴

On another occasion, it is said, Stalin telegraphed to Lenin about the need for removing one General Snessarov, in Trotsky's favor, from his command at Tsaritsin. Lenin acquiesced: " 'In my opinion we must agree with Stalin.' "⁵

" 'Agree with Stalin'--such in essence was the content of all Lenin's replies to reports and proposals from Comrade Stalin."⁶

After Stalin's phenomenal success at Tsaritsin, his followers have maintained, he was sent (together with one Dzerzhinsky) by the Central Committee to the Eastern front, Perm, where the Red Army had suffered defeat and disorganization, and faced complete rout and collapse.⁷ When Stalin and his associate arrived at Perm, they quickly analyzed the situation, evaluated the causes of the Red Army's plight, and made their recommendations to the Central Committee for rectifying the deplorable situation. Lenin concurred in their recommendations, Stalin has alleged,⁸ and the Red Army not only was revital-

³Voroshilov, op. cit., pp. 7-13. Rubinstein, op. cit., Part II, pp. 586-587.

⁴Voroshilov, op. cit., p. 15.

⁵Rubinstein, op. cit., Part II, p. 586.

⁶Idem.

⁷Voroshilov, op. cit., pp. 18-21. Rubinstein, op. cit., Part II, pp. 587-588.

⁸Rubinstein, op. cit., Part II, p. 587-8.

ized, but it succeeded in striking effective blows at the enemy and gaining a notable victory.⁹

Another of Stalin's military feats, reported by Voroshilov, was the former's successful organization of the defense of Petrograd in the spring of 1919. Threatened by a White Guard offensive under Yudenich, the Red Army seemed in grave danger.¹⁰ Stalin was again sent by the Central Committee, and again, within the short space of three weeks, a chaotic, demoralized army was reorganized and a successful offensive drive was begun which netted prisoners and military supplies.¹¹

Lenin, who had received telegrams from Stalin reporting brilliant progress, demanded a crushing victory in order to release the troops for service elsewhere.¹²

"Comrade Stalin completed this 'rapid and decisive blow' of which Lenin wrote. The White Guard troops were crushed. Petrograd was no longer in danger. . . ."¹³

Still another of Stalin's great military achievements was his re-organization of the Red Armies on the Southern Front, Communists have pointed out.¹⁴ Requested by the Central Committee to save the Southern Front from collapse before the advancing White Guard armies "equipped by the Allies and supported by the allied staffs," Stalin consented, conditional upon the acceptance of his terms by the Central Committee: non-interference from Trotsky; old and

⁹Voroshilov, op. cit., pp. 23-24.

¹⁰Voroshilov, op. cit., pp. 25-29. Rubinstein, op. cit., Part II, pp. 588-589.

¹¹Voroshilov, op. cit., pp. 26-29.

¹²Rubinstein, op. cit., Part II, p. 589.

¹³Idem.

¹⁴Voroshilov, op. cit., pp. 30-38. Rubinstein, op. cit., Part II. pp. 589-591.

new workers to be sent to the Southern Front, as directed by Stalin.¹⁵

Upon acceptance of his terms, Stalin immediately investigated the situation and formulated a new plan of campaign, totally at variance with the old one, alleged to be Trotsky's, which he characterized as "the most hard-headed factionalism, full of danger for the Republic. . . ." ¹⁶

"Stalin's plan was accepted by the Central Committee. Lenin himself wrote the order to the field staff for the immediate countermanding of the directives that had outlived themselves. . . . The results are known. It was the turning point in the Civil War. Deniken's rabble was driven into the Black Sea. The Ukraine and North Caucasus were delivered from the Whiteguards. A great share of the credit for all this belongs to Comrade Stalin." ¹⁷

These examples of Stalin's reputed leadership do not exhaust the accounts of his services in bringing glorious victory to demoralized Red Armies facing defeat, according to Communist reports, but they are indicative of why his followers have acclaimed him the foremost military strategist of the Civil War. ¹⁸

Voroshilov has thus characterized Stalin's services to the Soviet Union:

"In the period from 1918 to 1920 Comrade Stalin was probably the only person whom the Central Committee shifted from one front to another, choosing the danger spots, the places where the threat to the revolution was most imminent. Comrade Stalin was never to be found where things were relatively quiet and safe. He always appeared at the points where for a number of reasons the Red Army suffered reverses, where the successes of the counter-revolutionary forces threatened the very existence of Soviet power, the points where alarm and panic might at any moment develop into helplessness and catastrophe. He did not sleep nights; he organized; he took the reins of leadership into his own firm hands and made a clean sweep. He was unsparing and he achieved the necessary change and improvement of conditions. Comrade Stalin himself wrote of this in one of his letters to the Central Committee in 1919, saying he had been 'turned into a specialist for cleaning out the stables of the war department.' " ¹⁹

¹⁵Voroshilov, op. cit., pp. 30-31.

¹⁶Rubinstein, op. cit., Part II, p. 589.

¹⁷Voroshilov, op. cit., p. 34.

¹⁸For other examples of Stalin's military leadership see Voroshilov, op. cit., pp. 37-43. Rubinstein, op. cit., Part II, pp. 589-591.

¹⁹Voroshilov, op. cit., p. 6.

In recognition of, and as a reward for, his military services to the Soviet Union, the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of the Russian Soviets awarded Stalin the Order of the Red Banner, on recommendation of Lenin.²⁰

The Peasant Question. One of the main props of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution, Communists have charged, is the alleged hostility between the proletariat and the peasantry.¹ This, they declare, is contrary to fact and contrary to what Lenin taught. In the November Revolution, the exploited peasantry, allied to the proletariat, defeated the forces of counter-revolution and White Guardism.²

"When the proletariat under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party expropriated the manufacturers and bankers in the early stages of the socialist revolution in Russia, who was it that formed its armed force? The Red Army, in which the peasants formed a large part. When the rebellions of the kulaks against Soviet power on the Volga and in many other districts of Russia had to be quelled in 1918-1920, who did it? The same Red Army in which the poor and middle peasants were numerically strong. When the proletariat began to 'dekulakize' the rich peasants with the introduction of collectivization in the villages, who was its main support and who were its allies? Its main support were the poorest peasants in whose interests it was to carry out such expropriation. Its allies were the middle peasants. Suppose there were an attack upon the Soviet Union--who would be in the first ranks of defense? The Red Army, which consists of workers and collective farmers."³

This conception of a conflict between the proletariat and the peasantry, which is thus presented as Trotsky's position, is said to be expressly contrary to what Lenin stood for.⁴

Stalin himself has given extensive citations from the writings of Lenin repudiating this viewpoint.⁵ He has declared that the position he himself has taken was specifically set forth by Lenin:

²⁰Rubinstein, op. cit., Part II, pp. 589-590.

¹Olgin, Trotskyism--Counter Revolution in Disguise, pp. 46-47

²Ibid., pp. 46-48

³Ibid., pp. 47-48

⁴Ibid., p. 48.

⁵Stalin, Leninism, Vol. II, p. 14.

" . . . You say that the slogan workers' and peasants' government is 'Comrade Stalin's formula'. That is absolutely untrue. The fact is that this slogan, or if you will, this 'formula', is none other than Lenin's slogan. . . . Take all these and certain other of the works of Lenin and you will find that the slogan, or 'formula', workers' and peasants' government is the slogan, or 'formula', of Lenin and of nobody else."⁶

The National Question. As early as 1913, Communists have said, Stalin had formulated the correct approach to the nationality problem in his book, The National Question and Social Democracy, which Lenin had most highly commended to Gorky. Referring to Stalin, he (Lenin) had declared:

" 'We have a splendid Georgian who has got to work and is writing a large article for Prosveschenie, having collected all the Austrian and other materials.' "¹

At a conference of the Bolshevik Party held in 1913, Stalin and Lenin formulated the line of the Party on the national question. Its resolution read, in part, as follows:

" 'As regards the right of the nations oppressed by the tsarist monarchy to self-determination, i. e., to secede and form independent States, the Social Democratic Party must unquestionably defend this right. . . . This is demanded . . . by the cause of freedom of the Great Russian population itself, which cannot create a democratic state if reactionary Great Russian nationalism is not eradicated, a nationalism which is backed by the traditions of a number of bloodthirsty acts of vengeance against the national movements and which is systematically fostered not only by the tsarist monarchy and by all the reactionary parties, but also, in their servility to the monarchy, by the Great Russian bourgeois liberals, especially in the period of counter-revolution.' "²

Communists have further declared that at the Seventh Party Congress, Lenin and Stalin adamantly fought Trotsky, accused of opposing the basic policy of self-determinism.³

"At this conference, Comrade Stalin was the reporter on one of the main points on the agenda--the national question. He mercilessly crushed the Trotskyite Pyatakov who opposed the self-determination of nations. . . .

This draft resolution on the national question adopted by the con-

⁶Idem.

¹Rubinstein, op. cit., Part I, p. 483.

²Stalin, The History of the Civil War in the U.S.S.R., Vol. I, pp. 62-63.

³Rubinstein, op. cit., Part I, p. 484; Part II, p. 592.

ference was drawn up jointly by Lenin and Stalin. . . ."⁴

Stalin's Defense of Lenin. This presentation of the close collaboration and agreement said to have existed between Lenin and Stalin is not a complete one; it indicates the high points on which the followers of Stalin build their case. Other factors usually have been invoked too, such as Stalin's loyal defense of Lenin's many doctrines and propositions against the opposition of almost all the members of the Bolshevik Central Committee.⁵ The accord and harmony with which Lenin and Stalin worked together during the NEP period is also offered as evidence of their complete identity of viewpoint:

" . . . Lenin and Stalin directed the transition of the country to the New Economic Policy, smashing the resistance of the enemies of the Party--Trotsky, Bukharin, Shliapnikov, the 'Detsists'--and directing the gigantic work of the country."⁶

The fact that Lenin proposed Stalin as General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party is also offered as strong proof of their close agreement.⁷

The terse tribute which Henri Barbusse has paid to Stalin is perhaps one of the best indications of the Communist Party's estimation of their standard-bearer: "Stalin--is Lenin today".⁸

The following is a typical Communist Party evaluation of the joint roles played by Stalin and Lenin:

"The best comrade-in-arms of Lenin, the brilliant perpetuator of his cause, Comrade Stalin, teaches the Party, the Soviet people, and all working people to follow the path of Lenin and to fulfill his behests. Stalin's vow made over Lenin's grave has become the vow of millions, the solemn pledge of loyalty to Lenin's banner."⁹

⁴Rubinstein, op. cit., Part I, p. 484.

⁵Stalin, The Road to Power, p. 8. (Introduction by Trachtenberg.)

⁶Rubinstein, op. cit., Part II, p. 591.

⁷Ibid., p. 593.

⁸Ibid., p. 594.

⁹Idem.

"Lenin and Stalin These names are forever merged in the minds and hearts of the working people."¹⁰

Stalin's Version of Trotsky's Relations with Lenin

Prior to October 1917. Stalin has declared that efforts to represent Trotsky as an Old Bolshevik are utterly false and contrary to fact. Actually, he has said, Trotsky's disagreements with Lenin go all the way back to the early 1900's: Lenin was a Bolshevik, and Trotsky a Menshevik. Political differences of profound importance separated them.

Although Lenin's disagreements with Trotsky were momentarily swept aside by the impact of the Revolution, as were also those of the anarchists, the social-revolutionists, and others, their fundamentally divergent political viewpoints soon gave rise to bitter clashes, Communists have asserted, which led Trotsky further and further away from the Bolshevik principles expounded by Lenin.

"Trotsky calls himself 'the true Bolshevik-Leninist'. . . . There are people, especially among the younger generation, who think of him as an 'old Bolshevik'. . . .

"These are the facts:

"Trotsky started his political career around the turn of the century. In 1903, when the great division between the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks took definite form, Trotsky allied himself with the Mensheviks. In one way or another he fought Bolshevism until late in the summer of 1917. Time and again he agreed with this or that point of the Bolshevik program, but soon he would join the Mensheviks to fight the Bolshevik program--and Lenin. He renewed his open hostility to Bolshevism in 1923 and has been fighting it ever since."¹

"For a period of fifteen years before the November Revolution, Trotsky, as a confirmed Menshevik, fought against Lenin's party and against Comrade Lenin under the mask of 'Left' phrases and unrestrained demagoguery. As far back as 1911 Lenin deservedly nicknamed Trotsky 'Yudishka-Trotsky' (Referring to the pious hypocrite Yudishka Golovlev in Shchedrin's novel The Golovlev Family) and stated that Trotsky was behaving like 'a despicable careerist and factionalist'. Just before the November Revolution, Trotsky being a leader without an army, was compelled to join the Bolsheviks. He painted

¹⁰Idem.

¹Olgin, Trotskyism--Counter-Revolution in Disguise, p. 9.

his Menshevik skin with Bolshevik colors and concealed his irreconcilable disagreements with Lenin on the most important problems of the proletarian revolution, particularly on the central problem of the revolution, the possibility of building socialism in the Land of Soviets. But even after he had joined the Bolshevik Party he always remained an alien element in its ranks."²

"Trotsky himself fought the Bolshevik Party viciously for fifteen years in pre-revolutionary days. Affiliated with opportunist Menshevik elements, he, in 1904, denounced Lenin as 'a leader of the reactionary wing' and was repudiated by Lenin as a semi-Menshevik. Trotsky did not become a member of the Communist Party until 1917, just on the eve of the revolution. . . . Long before Lenin's death Trotsky was already treading the path that eventually led out of the Party and that has finally brought him to fascism and counter-revolution. Trotsky was never a real Bolshevik, and he has no claim whatever to the term 'Old Bolshevik'. . . ."³

"Can Trotskyism of the period of 1905 be regarded as an organic and integral part of Menshevism? We know that in 1927 Trotsky categorically declared that he was not a Menshevik after 1904 (but he never had the hardihood to deny his adherence to the Mensheviks in 1904). History knows few instances of such brazen political falsification. Trotsky himself is fond of recalling his work in the St. Petersburg Soviet of Workers' Deputies. But did he not represent the St. Petersburg Menshevik organization in the Soviet? And could he have done so if he were not a Menshevik? And why, if he was not a Menshevik in 1905, did Trotsky print all of his articles in the Menshevik press? . . ."⁴

More specifically, these charges have been made against Trotsky prior to 1917: In 1904 Trotsky published four pamphlets under the general title of Our Political Tasks.

". . . He denounced and slandered the Bolshevik path to victory over tsarism and capitalism outlined by Lenin and accepted by the Bolsheviks. He had the brazenness to attack Lenin as 'a leader of the reactionary wing' of the Party."⁵

During the Revolution of 1905, in the course of which Trotsky became chairman of the First Soviet of Workers' Deputies, according to Communist accounts,

²Lang, Trotskyism and Fascism, p. 34. (What appears in parenthesis is a footnote in the work cited.)

³Foster, Questions and Answers--On the Piatakov-Radek Trial, p. 25.

⁴Popov, Outline History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Vol. I, p. 178.

⁵Bittelman, Trotsky the Traitor, p. 12.

Trotsky's opposition to "armed insurrection" in favor of "spontaneity" was a thoroughly Menshevist position.⁶

"Instead of calling upon the masses to revolt against tsarism, Trotsky, like a liberal, deceived the workers, declaring that even under tsarism they were in a position to dictate their terms to the world stock exchange. Trotsky also assured the workers that in the forthcoming elections the proletariat would 'blow up the government of Count Witte and its master'. Here we have it--the overthrow of the government not by armed insurrection but by elections. Thus the Menshevik Trotsky betrays himself even in his period of maximum 'Leftism'. In the same way Trotsky deceived the workers by representing the St. Petersburg Soviet of Workers' Deputies as a labour government. As a matter of fact, the power of government had still to be conquered; the autocracy had still to be overthrown. Trotsky's liberal talk only served to divert the workers from this main task and to create among them the illusion that victory had already been achieved."⁷

In 1906, Communists charge, Trotsky was editing an anti-Bolshevik paper in Vienna.⁸ In 1912 he was a member of the "August bloc", a coalition formed to fight Bolshevism.⁹

". . . The chief aim of the 'August Bloc' was to fight Lenin and the Bolshevik policies. And who were the people that went into the making of this 'August Bloc'? Mensheviks, agents of capitalism in the labor movement, people thrown out of the ranks of the Bolshevik Party."¹⁰

Trotsky's record from the outbreak of the World War (1914) to the October Revolution has also been attacked. Throughout this period he has been accused of centrist vacillations: he opposed the Social Democratic governments, but he also opposed the policies of Lenin.¹¹

". . . With the outbreak of the World War he occupies a Centrist position. In words he opposes the Social-Democrats who joined their capitalist governments to help one group of imperialist robbers, as Lenin called them, against the other. In fact he does not even break with them and in his arguments he

⁶Popov, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 179.

⁷Idem.

⁸Olgin, op. cit., p. 10.

⁹Idem.

¹⁰Bittelman, op. cit., p. 13.

¹¹Olgin, op. cit., p. 10.

often defends them. He is against the war, but he is also against Lenin. The Leninist program called for work to defeat 'our own' government during the war; it called for transforming--in each country--the imperialist war into civil war, i.e., a revolution against the bourgeoisie; it called for the formation of a new international organization of all really revolutionary Socialists. Trotsky is against these slogans. When Lenin says: it is good for the revolution that 'our own' government should be defeated in war, Trotsky calls this 'a concession to the political methods of social-patriotism'. When the revolutionary socialists gathered in 1915 in Zimmerwald, Switzerland, to organize for the struggle against the imperialist war, Trotsky belonged, not to the Leninist left wing, but to the center."¹²

Despite his obvious anti-Bolshevik character, Communists have said, it was possible for Trotsky to become known because of the backwardness of the Russian labor movement and his own talents as a writer and orator, talents which gave no assurance that his viewpoints were correct.

"How did he become a revolutionary figure? He never was in the thick of the workers' life as builder of their organizations. He never succeeded in winning to his particular side any considerable number of workers. He always was, and always remained, a writer and speaker only, enjoying great popularity among the petty-bourgeois intellectuals. When the revolutionary labor movement in Russia was young, a man with a sharp pen and an oratorical talent such as Trotsky could easily become noted. It is for these qualities that he became a member of the First Soviet of Workers' Deputies organized during the Revolution in 1905. The Soviet of that time, according to Lenin, was a 'broad fighting union of Socialists and revolutionary democrats--lacking a definite form'. The first chairman of the Soviet, Chrustalev-Nosar, was not even a Socialist. After the latter's arrest, Trotsky became chairman. . . ."¹³

The October Revolution and After. Even as Stalin has shown his own agreement with Lenin on the crucial issues of the revolution, so too has he declared that the viewpoints of Lenin and Trotsky on these identical questions were at great variance: the Brest-Litovsk treaty; the building of socialism in one country; the peasant question; the nature of proletarian dictatorship; the trade union question; the problem of party organization.

These points of difference are perhaps the most significant ones, but other differences also are said to have existed.

¹² Idem.

¹³ Ibid., p. 9.

Brest-Litovsk Treaty. After the October Revolution, Trotsky's thesis of "Neither peace nor war" with Germany was adopted by the Central Committee over the opposition of Lenin. In his capacity as representative of the Soviet government, Trotsky so informed the German delegation of the Soviet Union's decision.¹ This policy, Communists have declared, was a ruinous one. The German army continued its advance, occupied more territory and subsequently presented even harsher peace terms to the Soviet government.² At the insistence of Lenin, the Central Committee finally turned against Trotsky and accepted Germany's peace terms.³

"This situation showed most clearly the great harm inflicted on the Soviet government by the policy pursued by Trotsky on the question of the Brest-peace, as a result of which the favorable moment for concluding peace with German imperialism was let slip. It was just because of this policy that the forces of counter-revolution received such extensive aid and support from the bourgeoisie abroad and such an immense base for the organization of their forces, for the organization of a military struggle against the Soviet power on such large territories as the Ukraine, the Crimea, the Don region and the Kuban."⁴

"Trotsky's disagreement with Lenin sprang up immediately after the seizure of power. It was necessary to sign the Brest-Litovsk treaty with Germany in order that the proletarian revolution might have a breathing spell to consolidate itself. Trotsky, then Commissar for Foreign Affairs, refused to sign the treaty. Lenin's stupendous will power, Lenin's lashing castigation, were required to force Trotsky to abandon his untenable pose, and to acquiesce in a step that spelled the saving of the revolution."⁵

Socialism in One Country.¹ The Communist party's criticism of Trotsky's theory of "permanent revolution" as contrasted with the theory of "socialism in one country" is presented elsewhere.² It must be sufficient to note here

¹Popov, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 11-12.

²Ibid., p. 14.

³Ibid., p. 19.

⁴Ibid., p. 33.

⁵Olgin, Trotskyism--Counter-Revolution in Disguise, p. 12.

¹Stalin, Leninism, Vol. I, pp. 119-120, 133, 166, 231-2. Popov, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 326-327.

²See Communist Party's criticism of Trotskyism, infra.

that according to Stalin the theory of permanent revolution is contrary to the teachings of Lenin.

Although the evidence presented by the Communist party does not seem to show any open breach between Lenin and Trotsky on this specific issue, the implication is nevertheless made that the utterances of Lenin flatly contradict the position taken by Trotsky on this basic theoretical question.

"Underrating the masses and overrating capitalism, Trotsky and his followers were led to declare the building of socialism in only one country--in the Soviet Union--impossible, and passionately to reject and ridicule Lenin's doctrine of the uneven development of the revolution, of the necessity of ensuring the revolution in one country, or in a few countries, and of building up socialism in one country, or in a few countries. The prospects that Trotsky and his followers held out were as vague as they were hazardous. . . ."3

"Lenin for many years fought against this Trotskyite theory, and after Lenin's death Stalin continued to lead the fight. While militant champions of the world revolution, they both insisted that socialism could be built in a country as rich and broad as the Soviet Union. . . ."4

"Leaving aside the discussion which took place during the years 1905-06, the question of the building of socialism in a single country was first raised in the Party during the imperialist war in 1915. It is well known that Lenin then for the first time formulated the thesis of the 'possibility of the victory of socialism' at first 'in one single capitalist country'. (See Collected Works, Vol. XVIII, p. 272.) That was the period of the turn from the bourgeois-democratic revolution to the socialist revolution. It is well known that Comrade Trotsky at that time disputed this thesis of Lenin's saying: 'It would be hopeless to think . . . that a revolutionary Russia, for example, could hold its own in the face of a conservative Europe.' (Trotsky's Works, Russian edition, Vol. III, Part I, pp. 89-90.)"5

Stalin has made the statement that Trotsky's thesis of "permanent revolution" is not only most remotely distant from Leninism⁶ but is actually a form of Menshevism⁷ first advanced by one Parvus, a Social-Democrat

³Fischer, Trotsky Unmasked, p. 24.

⁴Foster, Questions and Answers on the Piatakov-Radek Trial, pp. 9-10.

⁵Stalin, Leninism, Volume I, pp. 231-2.

⁶Stalin, Leninism, Vol. I, pp. 115, 265-266.

⁷Stalin, Questions Concerning the History of Bolshevism, p. 19; October Revolution, p. 111; Leninism, Vol. I, pp. 113, 120, 297. Popov. op. cit., Vol. II, p. 276.

". . . who later turned violent social-patriot during the World War. . . ."8

"In what way does Comrade Trotsky's theory differ from the ordinary Menshevik theory that the victory of socialism in one country, especially in a backward one, is impossible without the preliminary victory of the revolution 'in the principle countries of Western Europe'?

"In essence, it does not differ in the least.

"There can be no doubt at all. The theory of 'permanent revolution' advanced by Comrade Trotsky is but another variety of menshevism."9

". . . Trotskyism's denial of the possibility of building socialism in one country, namely in our country, constituted indubitable proof of the Menshevik character of its ideology. No one was as persistent as the Mensheviks in trying to prove that the building of socialism in one country, particularly in so backward a country as ours, was out of the question. . . ."10

The Peasant Question. Stalin has argued that Lenin and Trotsky were poles apart on the peasant question. While Lenin (and Stalin) recognized that only the unity of the proletarian and peasant elements could assure a successful revolution in the Soviet Union, Trotsky underestimated the role of the peasantry, and rather looked for support to the proletariat of other European countries for the conclusion of a successful revolution.¹

"At the beginning of the 1917 Revolution, Trotsky was still inclined to ignore the peasantry, and hoped that the Russian proletariat would be able to accomplish the revolution alone with the support of the proletariat of Western Europe. Lenin considered it one of the most important tasks to sever the peasant masses from the social-chauvinists and win their support for the proletariat. In April 1917 he wrote that Trotsky's slogan of 'no tsar, and a workers' government' was an attempt to reckon without the peasantry and was merely playing at the seizure of power. Therein lay the vast difference in the positions of Lenin and Trotsky in April 1917. . . ."2

"Equally characteristic was the attitude of Trotsky and his followers to the peasant question: Lenin and Stalin had confidence in the revolutionary energy of the peasant masses and they knew that the working class could gain its victory only in fraternal alliance with the peasantry. Trotsky and his followers regarded the peasants as a counter-revolutionary

⁸Olgin, Trotskyism--Counter-Revolution in Disguise, p. 45.

⁹Stalin, The October Revolution, p. 111.

¹⁰Popov, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 276.

¹Popov, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 374. Stalin, Leninism, Vol. I, pp. 111-112, 115, 164, 165, 213-214; The October Revolution, p. 101.

²Popov, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 374.

mass and believed that they could be kept in check only by the bayonet. . . ."³

" . . . Here, for instance, is what Comrade Trotsky says on the question of the contradictions between the proletariat and the peasantry:

'The contradictions in the situation of a workers' government in a backward country, with an overwhelming majority of peasants can be solved only on an international scale, on the arena of the world proletarian revolution. (Preface to the Year 1905.)'

"In other words, it is not within our power, we are not in a position to overcome and to remove the internal contradictions in our country, by our own efforts, because, it appears, we can remove these contradictions and finally build socialism only as the outcome of a world revolution, and only on the basis of a world revolution. Needless to say, this proposition has nothing in common with Leninism."⁴

The Nature of Proletarian Dictatorship. In consequence of their alleged disagreement on "socialism in one country" versus "permanent revolution", Lenin and Trotsky likewise differed basically on the nature of proletarian dictatorship. Lenin regarded an alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry as the basis of proletarian dictatorship, it is alleged, while Trotsky envisaged an alliance between the proletariat of Russia and that of Western Europe.¹

"What is the dictatorship of the proletariat according to Lenin?

"The dictatorship of the proletariat is the power which relies on the alliance between the proletariat and the toiling masses of the peasantry for 'the complete overthrow of capital' and 'the final establishment and consolidation of socialism'.

"What is the dictatorship of the proletariat according to Trotsky?

"The dictatorship of the proletariat is a power which enters 'into hostile collision. . . with the broad masses of the peasants' and seeks the solution of its 'contradictions' only, 'on the arena of the world proletarian revolution'. In what respect does this 'theory of the permanent revolution' differ from the well-known theory of Menshevism which repudiates the concept: dictatorship of the proletariat?

"In substance there is no difference."²

The Trade Union Question.¹ Communists have asserted that Lenin and

³Fischer, op. cit., p. 22.

⁴Stalin, Leninism, Vol. I, p. 165.

¹Stalin, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 112-113.

²Idem.

¹Lenin, Selected Works, Vol. IX, pp. 40-80. Popov, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 114-121.

Trotsky developed serious trade union difference about 1920 on the correct role of the trade unions in the Soviet Union. Trotsky wanted to make the trade unions appendages of the state, with administrative functions, it is charged, while Lenin (Stalin concurring) wanted them to retain all the recognized functions of trade unions in order to remain free and untrammelled.

"Before the thunder of the last battles of the civil war had died down Trotsky developed an open, violent opposition to the policy of Lenin in respect to the tasks of the trade unions. He wanted the unions to be, not organizations representing the workers in the factories and the shops, in the industries, but administrative units appended to the State and carrying out governmental functions. He organized, in opposition to Lenin, a small faction that threatened to disrupt the activities of the Communist Party at a time when unity was a question of life and death. Lenin branded this factionalism as a disruptive act. . . .

"Trotsky was defeated. Had his 'plan' succeeded, that would have wrecked the entire Soviet system."²

"Objectively considered, Trotsky's viewpoint expressed the tendencies of the bureaucratized elements in the upper circles of the Soviet apparatus, who not only failed to see the correct and real means for the solution of the crisis through which the country and Party were passing, but even urged the Party to intensify still further those negative features of bureaucracy which had already made their influence strongly felt in the Party and Soviet apparatus. These tendencies exercised an influence over some of our Party leaders. The transformation of the trade unions into state organs could not, of course, have saved them from bureaucratisation but would only have made this bureaucratisation more acute. Here Trotsky again and again showed his lack of confidence in the power of the Party and the working class. . . ."³

Party Organization. Communists have maintained that Trotsky differed with Lenin on the question of party organization as far back as 1904. Lenin wanted the Russian Social-Democratic party to be characterized by an iron discipline, and limited in its membership to active, loyal and trusted revolutionists, drawn from the proletariat rather than its bourgeois-intellectual fringe. Trotsky inclined to the view that discipline should be less rigid and membership less restricted.¹

²Olgin, Trotskyism--Counter-Revolution in Disguise, pp. 13-14.

³Popov, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 115.

¹Popov, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 109-118, 174.

"As against Lenin's definition of Point 1 of the statutes, Martov, vigorously supported by Trotsky, presented a formula which proposed to consider everyone a member of the Prussian Social-Democratic Labour Party who adopted its programme, supported it materially and rendered it regular personal assistance under the guidance of one of its organisation. In other words, membership of a Party organisation was not to be regarded as obligatory. Any bourgeois who donated a ruble, or who permitted, say, two illegal Party workers to meet at his home, any such bourgeois or intellectual, who never showed his face at a factory, who had nothing whatever in common with the working class, but who at some time or other rendered some fortuitous aid to the Party, was to be allowed to acquire all the right of membership. . . ."2

Communists believe that this lax conception of party membership and discipline persisted in Trotsky, leading him, some twenty years later to defy party decisions and break with the Communist party.³

Lenin's Characterization of Trotsky. According to the Communist party, Lenin bitterly assailed Trotsky's "anti-Bolshevik" tendencies and utterances. They have quoted from the former's letters and writings to substantiate this allegation.¹

" 'Trotsky distorts Bolshevism, for Trotsky never has been able to get any definite views on the role of the proletariat in the Russian bourgeois revolution. Much worse, however, is his distortion of the history of the revolution.' (V. I. Lenin, Collected Works, Russian edition, Vol. XV, p. 15)."²

²Ibid., p. 110.

³Ibid., p. 118.

¹Daily Worker, Jan. 30, 1937, p. 3. Hill and Mudie, Letters of Lenin, pp. 214, 220, 288, 375, 387. Rubinstein, op. cit., Part I, p. 480. Olgin, Trotskyism--Counter-Revolution in Disguise, p. 11. Lenin, Selected Works, Vol. IX, pp. 69, 70, 72. (The sources of Lenin's quotations are mentioned by these Communist writers, but no specific date is given for each quotation in every instance. Those found in the Daily Worker, Jan. 30, 1937, are there said to have been written by Lenin between 1913 and 1921.)

²Daily Worker, Jan. 30, 1937, p. 3.

" 'And we declare therefore, in the name of the Party as a whole, that Trotsky conducts an anti-Party policy, that he disrupts the laws of the Party, that he enters the road of adventurism and split.' (V.I. Lenin, Collected Works, Russian Edition, Vol. XV. p. 65.)"³

" 'In the theses of Trotsky and Bucharin there is a whole series of theoretical mistakes. A series of errors in principle. Politically the whole approach to the question is one continuous tactlessness. The 'theses' of Comrade Trotsky are a politically injurious thing.' (V. I. Lenin, Collected Works, Russian Edition, Vol. XXVI, p. 81.)"⁴

" 'Around the opposition (of Trotsky, Bucharin, Shlyapnikov) found shelter the Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionists counter-revolutionary groups who exaggerate rumors, give unheard-of vicious formulations, invent things that never happened, with the aim of besmirching, giving a filthy interpretation, sharpening the conflicts, damaging the work of the Party.' (V.I.Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. XXVI, p. 144.)"⁵

" 'In my opinion, our main task is to guard against getting entangled in foolish attempts at "unity" with the social-patriots (or, what is still more dangerous, with the wavering ones, like . . . Trotsky and Co.) and to continue the work of our own party in a consistently internationalist spirit.' (V.I. Lenin, The Revolution of 1917, Vol. I, English edition, p. 21.)"⁶

" 'The Trotskyite bloc He would say "synthesis" is a rotten, unprincipled Manilov combination of heterogeneous principles, the helpless longing of an unprincipled person for a "good" principle.' (Manilov, a character from Gogol's book Dead Souls. - - Trans.)"⁷

" . . . 'Men, like Trotsky are the affliction of our times' (Lenin); 'One does not argue with men like Trotsky; one unmask them as intriguers of the lowest order' (Lenin); 'Trotsky distorts Bolshevism' (Lenin); 'Trotsky leads an anti-party policy; he disrupts party legality, he takes the path of adventurism and split' (Lenin); . . ."⁸

"Lenin said: 'Trotsky always lives on gossip.' 'Trotsky deceives the workers in the most unscrupulous and shameless manner.' "⁹

³Idem.

⁴Idem.

⁵Idem.

⁶Olgin, op. cit., p. 11.

⁷Rubinstein, op. cit., Part I, p. 480. (What appears above in parenthesis is a footnote in the work cited.)

⁸Olgin, "By Their Writing," New Masses (April 19, 1938), Vol. XXVII, No. 4, p. 17.

⁹Olgin, Trotskyism--Counter-Revolution in Disguise, p. 139.

Stalin's Evaluation of Trotsky

Much of Stalin's evaluation of Trotsky is implicit in what has already been discussed. Despite the bitterness apparent from time to time, Stalin, like Trotsky, has insisted that the differences between them are strictly political and not personal.

" . . . I must say first of all that the differences with Trotsky are not personal differences. If these differences bore a personal character, the Party would not concern itself with them for a single hour, for it does not like individual persons to thrust themselves forward. . . ." ¹

The "Old Bolshevik" Myth. The denial of Trotsky's claim to the title of "Old Bolshevik" has already been discussed. ² In a like manner Stalin has contended that the importance of Trotsky's revolutionary role (prior to, during, and after the October Revolution) has been greatly exaggerated, and that his serious errors and disagreements with Lenin have been too little publicized. ³ Thus, Trotsky's participation in the October insurrection has not been denied, but his role is said to have been a minor one when compared with that played by Stalin. The uprising was directed by a "Center" consisting of five Communists appointed by the Central Committee; Trotsky was not a member of that Center, followers of Stalin have averred.

"During the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks in November, 1917, Trotsky played an important role as a member of the Military Revolutionary Committee. But it would be absurd to say that he was the leader of the uprising." ⁴

"Among the five members appointed by the Central Committee of the Communist Party on October 16 to serve as a center in charge of organizing the

¹Stalin, Leninism, Vol. I, p. 377.

²Supra.

³Stalin, The October Revolution, pp. 84-86; Leninism, Vol. I, pp. 122, 126, 131-3; The History of the Civil War in the U.S.S.R., pp. 177-178, 194, 530-531. Popov, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 156-157; Vol. II, pp. 79-81.

⁴Olgin, Trotskyism--Counter-Revolution in Disguise, pp. 11-12.

uprising, Trotsky's name does not appear."⁵

Red Army Leadership. Again, as Red Army leader, Trotsky's importance was distinctly secondary to that of Stalin, Communists have maintained; the former was the latter's subordinate and was obliged to take his orders.¹

". . . The civil war came and Trotsky was given a high post. He was, so to speak, propagandist-in-chief of the Red Army. He was Military Commissioner but he was not a military man. He knew nothing about the organization of an army, he had wrong ideas about revolutionary war strategy. . . . Trotsky traveled up and down the front, issuing crisp orders that can be quoted as examples of military style; he went into the trenches to talk to the Red Army men; he made great public orations--but he never led the civil war. He may have been deluded into believing that he was the whole moving spirit of that tremendous historic combat. He may believe so to the present day. The actual facts are just the reverse. The facts are that Stalin and Voroshilov were the great fighters on the various battle fronts--leaders with clear revolutionary vision and strategists of the first order."²

Falsification of History. Trotsky has also been accused by Stalin of deliberately falsifying the history of the Russian revolution and what has happened since in order to make facts fit into his own a priori molds and patterns of thought.¹ Thus he has been charged with falsifying, in 1922, the alleged "anti-revolutionary features" of 1905 Bolshevism in order to show how Lenin capitulated to his (Trotsky's) position on many important questions.² He has also been accused of making omissions from his History of the Russian Revolution of his own military incompetence which almost spelled defeat for the Red Armies on several fronts.³

In addition to the charge that Trotsky has falsified history, it is also claimed that his followers in the Soviet Union have "smuggled" Trotskyism into official histories and texts, coloring their viewpoints and distorting their facts.

⁵ Idem.

¹ Popov, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 79-80, 100-101. Voroshilov, Stalin and the Red Army, pp. 15, 30, 37.

² Olgin, op. cit., p. 13.

¹ Olgin, op. cit., pp. 145-149.

² Popov, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 373-374. Stalin, Leninism, Vol. II, p. 457.

³ Olgin, op. cit., p. 13. (For the official version of the October Revolution see Stalin, History of the Civil War in the U.S.S.R.

"Trotskyist counter-revolutionaries and their allies, the Right renegades, are fulfilling the social orders of the international bourgeoisie by falsifying the history of Bolshevism. To expose the falsifiers, to tear off their masks, to wipe out the rotten liberalism which feeds upon the vitals of Bolshevism and opens the door to these falsifiers, to turn the study of the history of our Party into a powerful ideological training ground, to steel our Party cadres and Party masses in Bolshevism--these are the tasks which face the Party, as disclosed in the letter of Comrade Stalin on the history of the Party. . . ."4

In short, then, Trotsky has been charged with substituting Trotskyism for Leninism;⁵ and although he has mouthed "left" phrases,⁶ his ideology is that of the vanguard of counter-revolution.⁷

Trotsky not Persecuted. Communists have not regarded the expulsion of Trotsky from the Communist Party in 1927 (and his subsequent exile) as political persecution. They have rather said that Trotsky had his hearing, advanced ruinous policies which were rejected, and failing to accept party discipline, made drastic measures inevitable.¹

". . . From 1924 to 1929 the entire Party and its press rang with the historic discussion, and so, also, did the whole Communist International. It was a prolonged, widespread, penetrating and intense mass political debate. Vote after vote among the Party members, in executive committees and in conventions were taken. Many books and hundreds of pamphlets were written. And the final result of it all was that the realistic policies put forth by Stalin and the Central Committee were repeatedly ratified by majorities running from 90 per cent to 98 per cent. . . ."2

Stalin has further declared that the followers of Trotsky were even permitted to remain on leading committees and in important posts long after their

⁴Stalin, Questions Concerning the History of Bolshevism, Introduction, p. IX.

⁵Stalin, The October Revolution, p. 87.

⁶Bittelman, Trotsky the Traitor, p. 29.

⁷Popov, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 317-322.

¹Stalin, Leninism, Vol. II, pp. 179-180.

²Foster, op. cit., p. 42.

proposals had been voted down. It was only after they began to act as a rival political party that active measures were taken against them.

". . . Why did we permit them to continue as members of the leading organs of the Party. Because Trotsky at that time, in spite of his differences with the Party, submitted to the decisions of the Central Committee and remained loyal. When did we begin to apply organizational penalties at all extensively? Only after the Trotskyists had organized themselves into a faction, created a factional centre, transformed their faction into a new Party, and began to call on people to take part in anti-Soviet demonstrations. . . ."3

"But Trotsky, a petty bourgeois individualist intellectual with an inflated ego and boundless ambition, remained unreconciled to the bankruptcy of his political program and the defeat of his attempts to win the masses to support it. His group clung desperately to their discredited theories, continued their agitation, defied the Party's decisions and discipline and they spread the fight throughout the Soviet Union and the Communist International. This finally led to Trotsky's expulsion in 1927 and to his later exile. . . ."4

Lenin's Testament. Partisans of Stalin have characterized the alleged will of Lenin ("Lenin's Testament") as a "piece of Trotskyite calumny".¹ They have declared that its original publication by Max Eastman in 1925 brought forth a prompt repudiation and denial from Trotsky himself which appeared under his own signature in the Daily Worker of August 8, 1925.² Communists have not denied the existence of a letter addressed by Lenin to the Thirteenth Congress of the Communist Party, but they have denied that it was ever intended to be a will and testament.³ They have further declared that even were its contents undisputed, Lenin at worst characterized Stalin as "rude", "but found no mistakes in his political line".⁴

³Stalin, Leninism, Vol. II, p. 180.

⁴Foster, op. cit., p. 10.

¹Olgin, op. cit., p. 139.

²Idem.

³Ibid., p. 140

⁴Idem.

Communist Characterization of Trotsky. Of the many characterizations and descriptions of Trotsky penned by Communists, the following by M. Olgin is perhaps the most expressive of the Communist viewpoint:

"Trotsky as an individual is only a representative of a certain social class. He is a petty-bourgeois intellectual. He started with opposition to the Revolution and the Communist Party, and he has finished with heading the counter-revolution. . . .

". . . He had a dream once in his life. He believed himself to be able to take the place of Lenin in the Bolshevik Party. Lenin's Party could not have been led by a man who never was a Bolshevik and always fought Lenin. But he failed to understand this obvious truth. Because he had dramatized himself into believing that he was the driving force of the Revolution he did not deem it possible for him to take a minor post. Because he was a petty-bourgeois intellectual he could not place the interests of the Party above his own personal ambition. He therefore had to dramatize himself into the great intransigent. From this position he slid down to the hideous gutter in which he finds himself today."¹

The Moscow Trials¹

So much has been written about the Moscow Trials in the Communist press that any attempt to present a detailed analysis from the Communist viewpoint of the three leading trials (Zinoviev-Kamenev, August 1936; Pyatakov-Radek, January 1937; Bukharin-Rykov, March 1938) would certainly carry this treatise far beyond its intended scope and size. In consequence, only the barest statement of the contentions of the Communist Party can be made.

The gist of the charges, it appears, is that with Trotsky as the chief terrorist and leader, the numerous defendants openly conspired with German and Japanese fascists to overthrow the Soviet Union and restore capitalism. In

¹Olgin, op. cit., pp. 21-22.

¹The Case of the Trotskyite-Zinovievite Terrorist Centre (Report of Court Proceedings). The Case of the Anti-Soviet Trotskyite Centre (Report of Court Proceedings). The Case of the Anti-Soviet "Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites" (Report of Court Proceedings). Foster, Questions and Answers on the Piatakov-Radek Trial. Yaroslvasky: The Meaning of the Soviet Trials. Vyshinsky, Trotskyism in the Service of Fascism against Socialism and Peace. Fisher, Murder at the Kamerovo Mines; Trotsky Unmasked. Pritt, At the Moscow Trial. Dimitroff, To Defend Assassins is to Help Fascism. Browder, Traitors in American History; Trotskyism Against World Peace. Lang, Trotskyism and Fascism. Bittelman, Trotsky the Traitor.

order to assure the success of their undertaking, they engaged in espionage, terrorism, diversion, assassination, and wrecking activities, never hesitating to unite with White Guards, agents provocateurs, kulaks, and spies to carry out their nefarious plans.

"The whole Trotskyite counter-revolutionary conspiracy was based upon the overthrow of the Soviet government by fascist troops and Trotsky assassins. They together worked to lay the basis for a military defeat of the U.S.S.R., and a basic part of the terrible scheme was to paralyze the Russian industries, especially those most important in war. To do this dastardly industrial wrecking work, many of the Trotskyite leaders were situated very strategically, occupying prominent management posts in industry. They confessed at the trial that they had caused a large number of railroad wrecks, coal mine explosions, etc., in which many workers had been killed. . . ."2

"Trotsky understood, of course, that such an agreement with the fascists, if carried out successfully, would involve the restoration of capitalism in the U.S.S.R. and he was prepared to accept that also. . . ."3

The most conclusive evidence of guilt is the confession of the accused, Communists have averred.

"Why, then, did the Trotskyites confess? The true explanation is simple enough. They confessed because they were guilty; because the proof of the guilt that confronted them before the great tribunal was so overwhelming that it left them no other alternative than confession."4

For further details and study, the reader is referred to the official literature cited in the footnotes.

²Foster, Questions and Answers on the Piatakov-Redek Trial, p. 5.

³Idem.

⁴Ibid., p. 55.

CHAPTER III

THE STALIN-TROTSKY CONTROVERSY: TROTSKY'S VERSION¹

The Problem. Trotsky has maintained that during the life of Lenin, allegations of sharp differences between them had never been made; their viewpoints, despite occasional disagreements, had always been regarded as more or less identical. "In the years from 1917 to 1923, there was no mention ever made of Trotskyism."² Only after 1924 was the "Legend of Trotskyism" invented and propagated by Stalin to bolster up his own case as the true successor and disciple of Lenin. After that date, Trotsky has contended, his own past was thoroughly "investigated" and overhauled to suit the needs and fancies of the Stalinist bureaucracy. Nothing was stopped at--distortion, vilification, omission and deliberate forgery. As a result, a new Trotsky emerged with a notoriously anti-Bolshevik past which had to be exposed in order to show him up for what he had always been: an anti-Leninist.³

Although plans to oust Trotsky from his position of leadership had been formulated in 1922,⁴ the fight against Trotskyism was first undertaken by Bukharin in 1924, after the death of Lenin, in Stalin's behalf.⁵ Yet it is interesting to note, Trotsky has observed, that in 1918 Bukharin himself had

¹This chapter should be read in conjunction with the Trotskyist criticism of the Third International, infra.

²Trotsky, The Stalin School of Falsification, p. 96.

³Trotsky, The Suppressed Testament of Lenin, pp. 37-41; My Life, pp. 500-501, 514, 516; The Stalin School of Falsification, pp. 16, 197.

⁴Trotsky, The Stalin School of Falsification, p. 125.

⁵Ibid., pp. 78-79.

zealously defended the "theory of permanent revolution" in as many words in a brochure first published under the supervision and with the approval of the official Communist Party, which brochure had been so re-published as late as 1923.⁶ This has puzzled Trotsky.

" . . . If we are to believe the legend created for the first time in the autumn of 1924, that there was an impassable abyss between Lenin's understanding of revolution and Trotsky's theory of the permanent revolution, and that the old generation of the party was brought up on the understanding of the irreconcilability of these two theories, then it is incomprehensible why Bukharin, at the beginning of 1918, could preach this theory with impunity, calling it by its name -- the theory of the permanent revolution. How did it happen that not a single person -- literally nobody in the entire party -- took issue with Bukharin? How and why did the official publishing house of the Central Committee publish this brochure? How and why did Lenin happen to keep silent? How and why did the Comintern publish in several foreign languages this brochure of Bukharin in defense of the permanent revolution? How and why did Bukharin's brochure retain its status as a party textbook up to the very death of Lenin? . . ."⁷

When Trotsky's Summaries and Perspectives of the Revolution was issued it bore the imprimature: "Published by the Communist International, Moscow, 1921."⁸ This volume, he has declared, was a ". . . most complete exposition of the theory of permanent revolution."⁹ In unequivocal terms it declared:

"Having thus conquered power, the proletariat cannot confine itself to bourgeois democracy. The proletariat is compelled to resort to the tactic of the permanent revolution -- that is to say, it must destroy the barrier between the minimum and maximum programs of social democracy, introduce increasingly radical reforms and strive for the direct and forthright support of the European revolution. . . ."¹⁰

Trotsky has also presented photostatic copies of letters of other prominent Bolsheviks in the Central Committee of that period who subsequently ad-

⁶ Idem.

⁷ Ibid., pp. 79-80.

⁸ Ibid., p. 82.

⁹ Ibid., p. 81.

¹⁰ Idem.

mitted that the issue of Trotskyism was an invention out of the whole cloth to discredit him and his adherents.¹¹

The letters of Radek and Piatakov are typical. Radek wrote the following to Trotsky in December 1927:

" . . . Moreover, I have heard repeated from the lips of Zinoviev and Kamenev the tale of how they had 'invented' Trotskyism as a topical slogan."¹²

Piatakov wrote in January 1928:

" 'Trotskyism' had been invented in order to replace the real differences of opinion with fictitious differences, that is, to utilize past differences which had no bearing upon the present but which were resurrected artificially for the definite purpose mentioned. . . ."¹³

To counteract this legend of Trotskyism, which he has utterly repudiated, Trotsky has presented in full detail his relations with Lenin, from the very beginning to the latter's death. Trotsky has affirmed that there is nothing to indicate that Lenin ever regarded the theory of 'permanent revolution' versus 'socialism in one country' as an issue during his lifetime. He strongly favored the latter position and was thoroughly in accord with Trotsky.¹⁴ Yet Stalin and his associates have carried on their anti-Leninism all in the name of that great Bolshevik leader.

" . . . It has become an established rule among the leaders of the present Comintern to make mock of Lenin: they trample underfoot all the teachings of the builder of the Bolshevik party and then they take a trip to Moscow to kneel before his mausoleum."¹⁵

¹¹ Ibid., p. 91-96

¹² Ibid., p. 93-95.

¹³ Ibid., p. 93.

¹⁴ See discussion of the Theory of Permanent Revolution by Trotsky, infra.

¹⁵ Trotsky, Whither France, p. 133.

Trotsky's Version of His Relations with Lenin

Prior to 1905. Despite the fact that in the split of the Russian Social Democratic party in 1903 Trotsky had espoused the cause of Menshevism while Lenin became the leader of the Bolshevik faction, Trotsky has held that his differences with Lenin were not basic and fundamental.¹ He (Trotsky) had not as yet recognized the need for the absolute centralized political party which Lenin had proposed. Before the break, moreover, Lenin had made many personal overtures to retain his support.²

Here is the issue as Trotsky viewed it:

"My break with Lenin occurred on what might be considered 'moral' or even personal grounds. But this was merely on the surface. At bottom, the separation was of a political nature and merely expressed itself in the realm of organization methods. I thought of myself as a centralist. But there is no doubt that at that time I did not fully realize what an intense and imperious centralism the revolutionary party would need to lead millions of people in a war against the old order. . . . At the time of the London Congress in 1903, revolution was still largely a theoretical abstraction to me. Independently I still could not see Lenin's centralism as the logical conclusion of a clear revolutionary concept. And the desire to see a problem independently, and to draw all the necessary conclusions from it, has always been my most imperious intellectual necessity."³

"Whatever I may say about it, however, the second congress was a landmark in my life, if only because it separated me from Lenin for several years. As I look back now on the past, I am not sorry. I came to Lenin for the second time later than many others, but I came in my own way, after I had gone through and had weighed the experience of the revolution, the counter-revolution and the Imperialist war. . . ."⁴

Nevertheless, Trotsky has declared, on fundamental principles he never fitted into the category of Menshevism, despite his differences with Lenin, because he never accepted its political line.

¹Trotsky, My Life, pp. 150-164.

²Ibid., pp. 162-163.

³Ibid., p. 162.

⁴Ibid., p. 164.

" . . . If by Menshevism is understood a political class line -- and that is the only way to understand it -- then I was never a Menshevik. I broke organizationally and politically with what was to become Menshevism in the middle of 1904, i.e., from the moment when it began to take shape as a political tendency. . . . On the question of the role of the classes in the revolution I was never in agreement with Menshevism. And this was the fundamental question. . . ."5

The Upheaval of 1905. The massacre of Father Gapon and his followers before the Winter Palace of the Tsar in January, 1905 ("Bloody Sunday") marked the beginning of Trotsky's overt break with the Mensheviks. He left Geneva, where he had been sojourning and arrived in Petrograd in February, 1905.¹ On his arrival in Petrograd, he formally remained aloof from both factions, although he continued to collaborate with L. B. Krassin, an outstanding member of the Bolshevik group.²

A short time after his arrival in Petrograd he became active in the work of the Petrograd Soviet which had been organized by numerous revolutionary groups.³ After the arrest of its president, Khrustalyvov, Trotsky headed the first presidium which succeeded him.⁴

Trotsky's relation with Krassin bore significant political fruit, according to the former's account. Trotsky's thesis of the road to power was later introduced by the latter as an amendment to Lenin's resolutions on this subject and constituted " . . . an almost verbatim statement of my thesis".⁵

Commenting on Lenin's reaction to the Krassin (Trotsky) amendment to the Lenin thesis, Trotsky has noted:

⁵Trotsky, The Stalin School of Falsification, p. 150.

¹Trotsky, My Life, p. 167.

²Ibid., pp. 171-173.

³Ibid., pp. 175-186.

⁴Ibid., pp. 181-182.

⁵Ibid., p. 173.

"Lenin, who in his introductory report had raised the question in its purely theoretical form, received Krassin's point of view with great sympathy. This is what he said:

" 'Taking it by and large, I subscribe to the opinion of Comrade Krassin. It is natural that as a literary man, I should concentrate my attention on the literary shaping of the question. The importance of the object of the struggle is pointed out by Comrade Krassin very exactly, and I wholly subscribe to his view. One cannot engage in a struggle without expecting to capture the position for which one is fighting.'

"The resolution was correspondingly amended. It may not be superfluous to remark that during the polemics of the last few years, the resolution of the third congress on the question of provisional government has been quoted hundreds of times as something opposed to 'Troskyism'. The 'red professors' of the Stalin school have not the ghost of an idea that they are quoting against me, as an example of Leninism, the very lines that I wrote myself."⁶

Trotsky has quoted from the memoirs of one who has since become a political enemy, A. V. Lunacharsky, to show where he (Trotsky) stood in Lenin's eyes in 1905:

"I remember somebody saying in Lenin's presence: 'The star of Khrustalyov is setting. Today the strong man is Trotsky.' For a moment Lenin's expression seemed to darken; then he said, 'Well, Trotsky has won this by his tireless and striking work.' "⁷

Trotsky has thus been most emphatic in denying any rift between Lenin and himself during the 1905 Revolution, either in their ideology or personal relations. He has characterized such an implication as a lie invented to discredit him in the eyes of contemporary Leninists even in respect to his achievements of 1905.

"What were the relations between Lenin and me during the revolution of 1905? Since his death the official history has been revised, and for 1905 as well, a struggle has been established between the powers of good and evil. What were the facts? Lenin took no active part in the work of the Soviet and he never spoke there. It goes without saying that he watched its every step intently; he influenced its policies through the representatives of the Bolshevik faction and expounded its work in his paper. There was not a question in which he disagreed with the Soviet policies. And yet -- the documents are witnesses -- all the decisions of the Soviet, with the exception perhaps of a few that were accidental and unimportant, were shaped by me; I submitted them first to the Executive Committee and then, in its name, I placed them

⁶Idem.

⁷Lunacharsky, quoted in Trotsky, My Life, p. 182.

before the Soviet. When the federative commission was formed of representatives of the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, again it was I who had to appear as its representative before the Executive Committee. And there was never a conflict in that connection."⁸

Trotsky has further alleged that so correct was his understanding and treatment of the Revolution of 1905, and so much was it in accord with that of Lenin and the Bolshevik-Leninists, that his first *magnus opus*, on this period, later became the officially accepted account among all sections of the Comintern:

"... Out of this struggle for the methods and traditions of 1905, came my book, at first entitled 'Russia in the Revolution', and later reprinted many times in various countries under the title of '1905'. After the October revolution, this book was regarded as the official text-book of the party, not only in Russia, but among the communist parties in the West as well. Only after Lenin's death, when a carefully prepared campaign was started against me, did this book of mine on 1905 come under fire. At first the attack was confined to a few captious remarks, which were sorry and trivial. But gradually the criticism became more daring; it grew and multiplied, became more involved and arrogant, and seemed all the noisier because it had to silence its own distress. In this way was treated the legend of the struggle of Lenin's and Trotsky's policies during the revolution of 1905."⁹

The October, 1917, Revolution. Trotsky has maintained that the differences which separated him from Lenin, while never great or significant, were gradually obliterated in the interim from 1905 to 1917; that independently of each other they had arrived at identical positions on crucial issues; that the alleged differences in viewpoint between them were utterly untrue and completely false; that actually they had worked together in close harmony.¹

"During the time when I stood outside the Bolshevik party, during that period when my differences with Bolshevism reached their highest point, the distance separating me from the views of Lenin was never as great as the distance which separates the present positions of Stalin-Bukharin from the very foundations of Marxism and Leninism."²

⁸ Ibid., p. 181.

⁹ Ibid., p. 183.

¹ Trotsky, The Stalin School of Falsification, pp. 6-7, 31-32.

² Ibid., pp. 85-86.

"After 1904 I stood outside of both the Social Democratic factions. I went through the revolution of 1905-1907 arm-in-arm with the Bolsheviks. During the years of the reaction, I defended revolutionary methods in the international Marxist publications against the Mensheviks. I still hoped, however, that the Mensheviks would move farther to the left, and I made several attempts to bring about a union in the party. It was not until the war that I became finally convinced of the utter hopelessness of the Mensheviks. In New York, at the beginning of March, 1917, I wrote a series of articles dealing with the class forces and perspectives of the Russian revolution. At that very time, Lenin, in Geneva, was sending to Petrograd his 'Letters from Afar'. And both of us, though we were writing in different parts of the world and were separated by an ocean, gave the same analysis and the same forecast. On every one of the principal questions, such as the attitude toward the peasantry, toward the bourgeoisie, the Provisional government, the war, and the world revolution, our views were completely identical. . . ."3

"On November 1, 1917, at the meeting of the Petrograd committee (the minutes of this historical meeting -- historical in every sense of the word -- are still kept secret) Lenin said that after Trotsky had become convinced of the impossibility of union with the Mensheviks 'there has been no better Bolshevik'. And in this he proved very clearly -- and not for the first time, either -- that it had not been the theory of permanent revolution that had separated us, but the narrower, though very important question of the attitude toward Menshevism.

"Looking back, two years after the revolution, Lenin wrote: 'At the moment when it seized the power and created the Soviet republic, Bolshevism drew to itself all the best elements in the currents of Socialist thought that were nearest to it.' Can there be even a shadow of a doubt that when he spoke so deliberately of the best representatives of the currents closest to Bolshevism, Lenin had foremost in mind what is now called the 'historical Trotskyism'? For what was nearer to it than the current that I represented? And whom else could Lenin have had in mind? Perhaps Marcel Cachin? Or Thalmann? To Lenin, when he surveyed the past development of the party as a whole, Trotskyism was no hostile and alien current of Socialist thought, but on the contrary the one that was closest to Bolshevism."4

"Lenin's attitude toward me changed several times during 1917. He met me first with a certain reserve, cautiously. The July days brought us very closely together, quite suddenly. When, in opposition to the majority of the leading Bolsheviks, I proposed boycotting the pre-parliament, Lenin wrote me from his refuge: 'Bravo, Comrade Trotsky!' Later on, judging from some accidental and quite erroneous indications, he concluded that I was being too dilatory in the matter of an armed uprising, and this suspicion was reflected in several of his letters during October. By contrast, his attitude toward me on the day of the revolution, when we were resting on the floor of a half-dark, empty room, became all the more unmistakable in its warmth and friendli-

³Trotsky, My Life, p. 329. Also see Trotsky, The Stalin School of Falsification, p. 6.

⁴Trotsky, My Life, p. 333.

ness. The next day, at the meeting of the Central Committee of the party, he proposed that I be elected to the chairman of the Soviet of People's Commissaries. I sprang to my feet, protesting -- the proposal seemed to me to be so unexpected and inappropriate. 'Why not?' Lenin insisted. 'You were at the head of the Petrograd Soviet that seized the power.' I moved to reject his proposal, without debating it. The motion was carried. On the first of November, during the impassioned discussions that took place at the meeting of the Petrograd party committee, Lenin exclaimed: 'There is no better Bolshevik than Trotsky.' Coming from him, the words meant a great deal. It is no wonder that the minutes of the meeting at which they were pronounced are still withheld from the public."⁵

Brest-Litovsk. Trotsky has devoted considerable space to a detailed presentation of his relations with Lenin and the Central Executive Committee in the matter of the Brest-Litovsk treaty concluding peace with Germany.¹ He has scored the "new dogma that Trotsky alone was responsible for the refusal to sign peace at Brest-Litovsk".² His position has been that his difference with Lenin in respect to the signing or the refusal to sign peace was one of degree rather than kind:

"As before, I insisted that Hoffman be allowed actually to start an offensive, so that the workers of Germany, as well as of the countries of the Allies, would learn of the offensive as a fact rather than as a threat.

'No,' rejoined Lenin, 'we can't afford to lose a single hour now. The test has been made. Hoffman wants to and can fight. Delay is impossible. This beast jumps fast.'

"In March, at the party congress, Lenin said: 'It was agreed between us (that is, Lenin and me) that we hold out until a German ultimatum, but that after the ultimatum we were to surrender.' I described the agreement above. Lenin consented not to attack my point of view before the party only because I promised him not to support the advocates of a revolutionary war. . . ."³

"At the meeting of the Central Committee on February 17, Lenin put the preliminary question to a vote: 'If the German offensive becomes a fact, and no revolutionary upheaval takes place in Germany, are we still to sign peace?' Bukharin and his followers answered this cardinal question by abstaining from voting. Krestinsky acted in the same way. Joffe voted against peace. Lenin

⁵Ibid., p. 339. Also see Trotsky, The Stalin School of Falsification, p. 17.

¹Trotsky, My Life, pp. 379-394; The Stalin School of Falsification, pp. 26-27.

²Trotsky, My Life, p. 386.

³Ibid., p. 387.

and I voted in favor of it. The next day I voted against the immediate despatch of the telegram stating our readiness to sign peace, as Lenin proposed. During the day, however, telegraphic reports informed us that the Germans had opened an offensive, had seized our military supplies and were advancing in the direction of Dvinsk. That evening I voted for Lenin's telegram; now there was no possible doubt that the German offensive would be broadcast to the entire world."⁴

The concluding chapter in the Brest-Litovsk peace episode took place in October 1918. At an important meeting of high Soviet officials, Trotsky spoke thus:

"I deem it my duty to say, in this authoritative assembly, that at the hour when many of us, including myself, were doubtful as to whether it was admissible for us to sign the Brest-Litovsk peace, only Comrade Lenin maintained stubbornly, with amazing foresight and against our opposition, that we had to go through with it to tide us over until the revolution of the world proletariat. And now, we must admit that we were wrong."⁵

Trotsky has reported that his courageous acknowledgment of mistaken judgment led to a "prolonged ovation" which was so recorded in the stenographic reports of the meeting. From this he has concluded:

"The party wanted to show in this way that it understood and appreciated my attitude toward Lenin, an attitude devoid of jealousy or pettiness. I realized only too well what Lenin meant to the revolution, to history, and to me. He was my master. This does not mean that I repeated his words and gestures a bit late, but that I learned from him to arrive independently at the same decision."⁶

That Trotsky's differences with Lenin on Brest-Litovsk were far from significant is attested by the fact that almost immediately Lenin enthusiastically endorsed him for the highest military post under the new regime, Chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council.⁷

Lenin on the Theory of Permanent Revolution. In the eyes and mind of Trotsky there can be no doubt that Lenin openly espoused permanent revolution, in word and deed; that he never thought otherwise; that socialism in one country

⁴Ibid., p. 388.

⁵Ibid., pp. 393-394.

⁶Ibid., p. 394.

⁷Trotsky, The Stalin School of Falsification, p. 27.

was utterly alien to his philosophy and interpretation of Marx. He has quoted from innumerable writings of Lenin (some from editions available only in Russian, others from unpublished manuscripts, and still others from translated works) to prove this.

In a letter to the Swiss workers, Lenin wrote in part:

"Russia is a peasant country, one of the most backward of European countries. Here socialism cannot immediately conquer, but the peasant character of the country, with enormous tracts of land remaining in tact, in the hands of the nobility, can on the basis of the experience of 1905, give enormous scope to a bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia, and make our revolution a prologue to the world-wide socialist revolution, a step leading to it."¹

Commenting on this Trotsky has declared:

". . . While remaining for Lenin still democratic, the Russian revolution was to give the stimulus to a socialist revolution in Europe, which should then drag belated Russia into its whirlpool. Such was Lenin's general conception when he left Zurich. . . ."²

"The following is what Lenin said in retrospect at the Third Congress of the Comintern:

'It was clear to us that the victory of the proletarian revolution In Russia. L.T. is impossible without the support of the international revolution, the world revolution. Even before the revolution, and also after it, we believed: the revolution will begin immediately, or at least very soon, in the other, capitalistically advanced countries, otherwise we are lost. And although we were aware of this, we did everything to maintain the Soviet system under all circumstances and at any price, for we knew that we are working not only for ourselves but also for the international revolution. We knew it, and repeatedly expressed this conviction of ours before the October revolution as well as immediately afterward and during the conclusion of the Brest-Litovsk peace. And generally speaking this was right. In reality, the movement did not go in such a straight line as we had expected.' (Minutes of the Third Congress of the Comintern, page 354, Russian edition.)"³

In the Third International after Lenin, Trotsky has given several pages of quotations taken from the various writings of Lenin at different times to show how Lenin consistently upheld permanent revolution.⁴ A few are repro-

¹Trotsky, History of the Russian Revolution, Vol. I, p. 318.

²Idem.

³Trotsky, Permanent Revolution, pp. 136-137.

⁴Trotsky, Third International After Lenin, pp. 12-14.

duced:

"On March 7, 1918, he said a propos of the Brest-Litovsk peace: 'This is a lesson to us because the absolute truth is that without a revolution in Germany, we shall perish.' (Lenin, Works, Vol. XV, p. 132, Russian [old] ed.)"⁵

"At the Third Congress of the Comintern in July 1921, Lenin declared in the theses on the tactics of the Communist Party of Russia: 'An equilibrium has been created, which though extremely precarious and unstable, nevertheless enables the socialist republic to maintain its existence within capitalist surroundings, although of course not for any great length of time.'"⁶

"Again, on July 5, 1921, Lenin stated point-blank at one of the sessions of the Congress: 'It was clear to us that without aid from the international world revolution, a victory for the proletarian revolution is impossible. Even prior to the revolution, as well as after it, we thought that the revolution would also occur either immediately or at least very soon in other backward countries and in the more highly developed capitalist countries, otherwise we would perish. Notwithstanding this conviction, we did our utmost to preserve the Soviet system under any circumstances and at all costs, because we know that we are working not only for ourselves but also for the international revolution.' (Works, Vol. XVIII, part 1, p. 321.)

"How infinitely removed are these words, also, so superb in their simplicity and permeated with the spirit of internationalism, from the present smug fabrication of the epigones!"⁷

"However, we consider it in place to present at least one of Lenin's direct statements on the controversial question which does not need any comment and will not permit any false interpretation.

'We have emphasized in many of our works, in all our speeches, and in our entire press that the situation in Russia is not the same as in the advanced capitalist countries, that we have in Russia a minority of industrial workers and an overwhelming majority of small agrarians. The social revolution in such a country can be finally successful only on two conditions: first, on the condition that it is given timely support by the social revolution in one or more advanced countries. . . second, that there be an agreement between the proletariat which establishes the dictatorship or holds state power in its hands and the majority of the peasant population. . . .

'We know that only an agreement with the peasantry can save the socialist revolution in Russia so long as the revolution in other countries has not arrived.' (Works, Vol. XVIII, part 1, pp. 137f. Our emphasis.)"⁸

Military Conduct of Civil War. Trotsky has pointed with pride to his work as War Commissar and chairman of the Supreme War Council. His work of

⁵Ibid., pp. 12-13.

⁶Ibid., p. 13-14.

⁷Ibid., p. 14.

⁸Ibid., pp. 34-35.

reorganizing, integrating and sustaining the morale of a badly-equipped army was a significant factor in assuring the success of the October Revolution.¹ He has recalled his single-handed fight against Lenin and other members of the Executive Committee who were ready to abandon Petrograd in the struggles against the White Armies under Yudenich.² He finally prevailed upon them not to do so. And in the actual fighting, his presence saved the day.³

In consequence of all this, he has observed:

" . . . It occurs to me that if it had been me against Lenin, instead of Lenin against me, who in October, 1919, defended the idea of surrendering Petrograd, there would have been plenty of literature today, in every known language, exposing this destructive manifestation of 'Trotskyism'."⁴

Trotsky's trump card designed to indicate how closely he stood to Lenin and to what extent Lenin had confidence in his policies is the blanket endorsement and counter-signature which Lenin gave to his (Trotsky's) orders in the trying days of the Civil War.

At the bottom of a blank sheet, Lenin wrote the following:

"Comrades:

Knowing the strict character of Comrade Trotsky's orders, I am so convinced, so absolutely convinced, of the correctness, expediency, and necessity for the success of the cause of the order given by Comrade Trotsky, that I unreservedly indorse this order.

V. Ulyanov Lenin."⁵

After pointing out that Lenin at the time declared, "I will give you as many forms like this as you want," Trotsky has concluded:

" . . . This confidence in me he expressed to the full in a few lines. The epigones may look in vain for such a document among their possessions. If Stalin finds anything in his archives, it could only be Lenin's 'Will', which Stalin concealed from the party -- the 'will' in which Stalin himself is referred to as a disloyal man, capable of abuse of power."⁶

¹Trotsky, My Life, pp. 395-460.

²Ibid., pp. 423-435.

³Ibid., p. 429.

⁴Ibid., p. 425.

⁵Ibid., pp. 468-469. Also see Trotsky, The Stalin School of Falsification, pp. 43, 48-49.

⁶Trotsky, My Life, p. 469.

Trotsky has also quoted Maxim Gorky to sustain his contention that Lenin recognized and appreciated his military genius.

"Aside from the hundreds of testimonials by Lenin himself, there is a vivid account by Maxim Gorky of his attitude toward my war work: 'Striking the table with his hand, he (Lenin) said: 'Could any one point out to me another man who could organize an almost model army in a year and even win the respect of military experts? We have such a man! We have everything. And there will be miracles.' "

"According to Gorky, Lenin said to him in the same conversation: 'Yes, yes. I know. Some lies are being told about my relations to him. Too many lies are being told, and especially about me and Trotsky.' What would Lenin have said to-day, when the lying about our mutual relations, despite facts, documents and logic, has become a state cult?"⁷

The Peasant Question. On the peasant question, Trotsky has declared, he and Lenin were one:

" . . . So far as the peasantry was concerned, there was not even a shade of disagreement between Lenin and myself. Lenin, at that time, was completing the first stage of his struggle against the Right Bolsheviks and their slogan, 'democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry'"¹

Lenin himself, in Izvestia and Pravda, had declared that no differences of any kind existed, categorically adding:

" . . . I subscribe with both hands to what comrade Trotsky said."²

Lenin's Will. In May 1922, Lenin suffered a stroke from which he never fully recovered. From that time until his death in January 1924, it was Trotsky with whom he was in continuous communication, and to whom he turned as the one to carry on his policies, Trotsky has alleged.¹ It was during this period, Trotsky has charged, that the epigones of the party, under the guidance and leadership of Stalin, conspired to undermine his (Trotsky's) influence and leadership of the Party.² It was during this period, too, that

⁷ Ibid., p. 360. Also see Trotsky, The Stalin School of Falsification, pp. 47-48.

¹ Trotsky, Lessons of October, p. 107. Also see Trotsky, The Stalin School of Falsification, pp. 36-39.

² Trotsky, The Stalin School of Falsification, p. 39.

¹ Ibid., pp. 59-60, 63.

² Trotsky, My Life, pp. 470-517.

Lenin wrote what has since been known as his "will".

Trotsky has maintained that Stalin took advantage of the illness and incapacity of Lenin to further his own political ends, particularly in connection with some disturbances in Georgia where he acted on his own initiative but under the cloak of authority of the Central Committee. It was this conduct which prompted Lenin to ask Trotsky to take a hand in the matter, with these words:

" ' . . . At present, the case is under the 'persecution' of Stalin and Dzerzhinsky, and I cannot trust their impartiality. Quite the opposite! "3

Trotsky further alleged: " . . . It turned out that Stalin had betrayed Lenin's confidence; in order to insure himself support in Georgia, acting behind Lenin's back and without the knowledge of the entire Central Committee, he had carried out, with the help of Ordzhonikidze and not without support from Dzerzhinsky, an organized coup d'etat there against the best section of the party, shielding himself falsely behind the authority of the Central Committee. As Lenin's illness made it impossible for him to meet other comrades, Stalin had taken advantage of this and had surrounded him with misinformation. Lenin had instructed his secretaries to gather all the material they could on the Georgian matter and decided to come out openly with a statement. It is hard to say what shocked Lenin most -- Stalin's personal disloyalty or his rough and bureaucratic policy on the national question. Probably it was a combination of both. . . ."4

Trotsky has further maintained that not only did Lenin oppose Stalin, but was actually preparing to remove him from his post and discredit him in the party as well:

"Lenin came to know Stalin really only after the October revolution. He valued his firmness and his practical mind, which is three-quarters cunning. And yet, at every step, Lenin struck at Stalin's ignorance, at his narrow political horizon, and his exceptional moral coarseness and unscrupulousness. Stalin was elected to the post of general secretary of the party against the will of Lenin, who acquiesced only so long as he himself headed the party. . . . Lenin was now preparing not only to remove Stalin from his post of general secretary, but to disqualify him before the party as well. . . ."5

As for the will itself, produced some time after Lenin's death, there can be little doubt of its authenticity, Trotsky has declared. Stalin him-

³Ibid., p. 483.

⁴Idem.

⁵Ibid., p. 480.

self admitted as much in a speech reproduced in Imprecor, November 17, 1927.⁶ On another occasion, Stalin quoted a substantial portion of the will in an attack upon Bukharin and Piatakov, referring to it as "Comrade Lenin's well-known letter".⁷ A comparison of the "will" with the "letter" discloses a complete identity with respect to the portions quoted by Stalin.

The will, less than a thousand words in length, was written on December 25, 1922, with a brief postscript dated January 4, 1923. Its purpose, as Lenin wrote, was to point out a way of obtaining stability on the Central Committee, thereby avoiding a split in its ranks. This could best be accomplished by removing Stalin.

"I think that the fundamental factor in the matter of stability -- from this point of view -- is such members of the Central Committee as Stalin and Trotsky. The relation between them constitutes, in my opinion, a big half of the danger of that split, which might be avoided, ~~and the avoidance of that split, which might be avoided~~, and the avoidance of which might be promoted in my opinion by raising the number of members of the Central Committee to fifty or one hundred.

"Comrade Stalin, having become General Secretary, has concentrated an enormous power in his hands; and I am not sure that he always knows how to use that power with sufficient caution. On the other hand, comrade Trotsky, as was proved by his struggle against the Central Committee in connection with the question of the People's Commissariat of Ways and Communications, is distinguished not only by his exceptional ability -- personally, he is, to be sure, the most able man in the present Central Committee -- but also by his too far-reaching self-confidence and a disposition to be far too much attracted by the purely administrative side of affairs."

"Postscript: Stalin is too rude, and this fault, entirely supportable in relation among us communists, becomes unsupportable in the office of General Secretary. Therefore, I propose to the comrades to find a way to remove Stalin from that position and appoint another man who in all respects differs from Stalin only in superiority -- namely, more patient, more loyal, more polite and more attentive to comrades, less capricious, etc. This circumstances may seem an insignificant trifle, but I think that from the point of view of preventing a split and from the point of view of the relation between Stalin and Trotsky which I discussed above, it is not a trifle, or it is such a trifle as may acquire a decisive significance."⁸

⁶Trotsky, The Suppressed Testament of Lenin, p. 3.

⁷Stalin, Leninism, Vol. II, p. 221.

⁸Excerpts from Lenin's Testament, quoted in Trotsky, The Suppressed Testament of Lenin, pp. 5-7.

To Trotsky, the will clearly pointed to himself as Lenin's successor:

" . . . Unquestionably, his object in making the will was to facilitate the work of direction for me. . . .

" . . . The ablest is Trotsky; his defect is his excess of self-confidence. Stalin is rude, disloyal, and capable of abuse of the power that he derives from the party apparatus. Stalin should be removed to avoid a split. This is the substance of the 'Will'. It rounds out and clarifies the proposal that Lenin made me in our last conversation."⁹

As final proof of his contentions, Trotsky has disclosed that Lenin's will has been carefully suppressed by the Stalinists and its publication is forbidden by the Comintern; that demonstrations on his behalf with such placards as "Fulfill the Testament of Lenin" have been ruthlessly broken up on the ground that he, Trotsky, was preparing for an insurrection.¹⁰

" . . . At the seniority caucus of the twelfth congress he (Stalin) made bold to speak in the style characteristic of him of Lenin's letter as the document of a sick man under the influence of 'womenfolk'. (That is, Krupskaya and the two secretaries). Under pretext of the necessity of finding out the actual will of Lenin, it was decided to put the letter under lock and key. There it remains to this day . "¹¹

Trotsky's Version of Stalin's Relations with Lenin

Trotsky has repudiated the contentions of the Stalinists that the relations between Stalin and Lenin were harmonious from the time of their joint ventures until the latter's death.

Prior to October, 1917. Before Lenin's arrival in Russia in 1917, many of the leaders of the Bolshevik party favored cooperation with the Provisional government, among them Stalin. This was clearly a non-revolutionary position which Lenin himself quickly repudiated.

" . . . The line pursued by Stalin and Kamenev, prior to the arrival of Lenin, was definitely replaced by the strategy of the conquest of power. Thus Stalin had regarded the difference between the Soviet and the Provisional

⁹Trotsky, My Life, pp. 479-480.

¹⁰Trotsky, The Suppressed Testament of Lenin, pp. 30, 34.

¹¹Ibid., p. 31.

Government as merely one of a division of labor. He looked on the Provisional Government in his own words 'as a fortifier of the conquests of the revolutionary people'. He was for a union with the Mensheviks. 'We must do it. It is necessary to define our proposal for a basis of union; union is possible on the basis of Zimmerwald-Kienthal. . . . We will live down petty disagreements within the party.' Lenin's April Theses had struck a deeply discordant note. 'Even our Bolsheviks show confidence in that government,' wrote Lenin. 'Only the fumes of the revolution can explain that. That is the death of socialism If that's your position, our ways part. I prefer to remain in the minority.' "1

The October Revolution and After. The differences which separated Stalin from Lenin according to Trotsky were these: (a) organizational policy; (b) foreign trade; (c) national policy.¹

Party Organization. Trotsky has held that Lenin opposed Stalin's organizational policies because, among other things, he utilized his post as a means of building up a personal following of men who would be amenable to his will and responsive to his ideas.

" . . . Highly important for our theme, however, is the verbal estimate which Lenin gave of the Workers and Peasants Inspection: 'Let us speak frankly. The People's Commissariat of Workers and Peasants Inspection does not enjoy at the present moment a shadow of authority. Everybody knows that a worse organized institution than the institution of our Workers and Peasants Inspection does not exist, and that under present conditions you can ask nothing of this People's Commissariat.' This extraordinarily biting allusion in print by the head of the government to one of the most important state institutions, was a direct and unmitigated blow against Stalin as the organizer and head of this Inspection. The reason for this should now be clear. The Inspection was to serve chiefly as an antidote to bureaucratic distortions of the revolutionary dictatorship. This responsible function could be fulfilled successfully upon condition of complete loyalty in its leadership, but it was just this loyalty which Stalin lacked. He had converted the Inspection like the party Secretariat into an implement of machine intrigues, of protection for 'his men' and persecution of his opponents. . . ."2

Foreign Trade. On the matter of disagreement upon the question of foreign trade, Trotsky has indicated that Stalin departed from Lenin's policy of state monopoly, although he (Trotsky) has not gone into any detailed explanation con-

¹ Trotsky, Lessons of October, Explanatory Notes, pp. 118-119.

¹ Trotsky, The Suppressed Testament of Lenin, pp. 24-28.

² Ibid., pp. 28-29.

cerning the basic nature of the different viewpoint:

" . . . The November plenum of the Central Committee (1922), sitting without Lenin and without me, introduced unexpectedly a radical change in the system of foreign trade, undermining the very foundation of the state monopoly. . . . Lenin heard of this. On the 13th of December he wrote me: 'I earnestly urge you to take upon yourself at the coming plenum the defense of our common view as to the unconditional necessity of preserving and enforcing the monopoly. . . . The previous plenum took a decision in this matter wholly in conflict with the monopoly of foreign trade.' Refusing any concessions upon this question, Lenin insisted that I appeal to the Central Committee and the congress. The blow was directed primarily against Stalin, responsible as general secretary for the presentation of questions at the plenums of the Central Committee. This time, however, the thing did not go to the point of open struggle. Sensing the danger, Stalin yielded without a struggle, and his friends with him. At the December plenum the November decision was revoked. 'It seems we captured the position without firing a shot, by mere maneuvers,' Lenin wrote me jokingly on December 21."¹

The National Question. The third great difference which manifested itself was on question of national policy. Russia was composed of many nationalities which wished to retain their identity in the Soviet Union. Trotsky said that Stalin was prepared to incur their wrath by placing administrative and bureaucratic exigencies ahead of proper tactics in dealing with them.

"The disagreement in the sphere of national policy was still sharper. In the autumn of 1922 we were preparing the transformation of the Soviet state into a federated union of national republics. Lenin considered it necessary to go as far as possible to meet the demands and claims of those nationalists who had long lived under oppression, and were still far from recovering from its consequences. Stalin, on the other hand, who in his position as People's Commissar for Nationalities directed the preparatory work, was conducting in this sphere a policy of bureaucratic centralism. . . .

"The bureaucratic national policy had already at that time provoked a keen opposition in Georgia, uniting against Stalin and his right hand man, Ordjonikidze, the flower of Georgian Bolshevism. . . . The struggle in the borderlands was too keen, and Stalin had bound himself too closely with definite groupings, to yield in silence as he had on the question of the monopoly of foreign trade. In the next few weeks Lenin became convinced that it would be necessary to appeal to the party. At the end of December he dictated a voluminous letter on the national question which was to take the place of his speech at the party congress if illness prevented him from appearing."²

Stalin's attitude toward Lenin on this question, according to Trotsky,

¹Ibid., p. 25.

²Ibid., pp. 25-26.

was one of extreme rudeness, culminating in the accusation that Lenin was guilty of "national liberalism".³ Lenin's attitude was made clear in a note in December 1922, in which he sharply rebuked Stalin's role.

" 'I think that here the hastiness and administrative impulsiveness of Stalin played a fatal role, and also his spitefulness against the notorious 'social nationalism'. Spitefulness in general plays the worst possible role in politics.' "⁴

Lenin distrusted Stalin. The last period of Lenin's life, dating from his first illness to his death, especially after his second illness, was marked by an increasing antagonism between Lenin and Stalin, according to Trotsky, and a period in which Stalin took advantage of the incapacity of the former to build his own political fences, at Lenin's expense, and in defiance of Lenin's wishes.

" . . . Let us recall once more the principal dates. In September Lenin opened fire against the national policy of Stalin. In the first half of December he attacked Stalin on the question of the monopoly of foreign trade. On December 25, he wrote the first part of his testament. On December 30, 1922, he wrote his letter on the national question (the 'bomb'). On January 4 he added a postscript to his testament on the necessity of removing Stalin from his position as general secretary. On January 23 he drew up against Stalin a heavy battery: the project of a Control Commission. In an article on the 2nd of March he dealt Stalin a double blow, both as organizer of the Inspection and as general secretary. On March 5 he wrote me on the subject of his memorandum on the national question: 'If you would agree to take upon yourself its defense then I could be at rest.' . . .¹

"Lenin keenly sensed the approach of a political crisis, and feared that the apparatus would strangle the party. The policies of Stalin became for Lenin in the last period of his life the incarnation of a rising monster of bureaucratism. The sick man must more than once have shuddered at the thought that he had not succeeded in carrying out that reform of the apparatus about which he had talked with me before his second illness. A terrible danger, it seemed to him, threatened the work of his whole life."²

Trotsky has offered in evidence a few letters written by Lenin in which the latter scored Stalin's intrigue and strongly hinted that he (Stalin) could

³Trotsky, The Stalin School of Falsification, p. 68.

⁴Idem.

¹Trotsky, The Suppressed Testament of Lenin, p. 29.

²Ibid., p. 31.

not be trusted.³

The following is one of the letters:

" 'Strictly confidential. Personal.

'Esteemed Comrade Trotsky:

'I earnestly ask you to undertake the defense of the Georgian affair at the Central Committee of the party. That affair is now under 'prosecution' at the hands of Stalin and Dzerzhinsky and I cannot rely on their impartiality. Indeed, quite the contrary! If you would agree to undertake its defense, I could be at rest. If for some reason you do not agree, send me back all the papers. I will consider that a sign of your disagreement.

'With the very best comradly greetings,
'Lenin.' "4

Trotsky has offered another example of Lenin's opposition to Stalin, and the extremes to which Stalin (and others) went to deceive Lenin and defeat his wishes.⁵ Stalin headed the Rabkrin, a Commissariat of Workers' and Peasants' Inspection whose functions, for the moment, are irrelevant. Lenin favored its reorganization, contending that it was of no practical use.⁶ His objections were not regarded as significant by the Political Bureau. Lenin's request for the publication of his views in Pravda were met, over the opposition of Trotsky and Kamenev, by the printing of a one-copy special edition, which was presented to Lenin on his sickbed.⁷ Stalin concurred in the plan to deceive Lenin if for no other reason than that he was the chief beneficiary therefrom.

The last bit of evidence which Trotsky has offered is a letter written

³Trotsky, The Stalin School of Falsification, pp. 55-56, 68-69.

⁴Ibid., p. 69.

⁵Ibid., pp. 71-75.

⁶Ibid., p. 75.

⁷Ibid., pp. 72-73.

shortly before Lenin's death in which Lenin requested that all relations between them be severed. This has been held to be extremely damaging evidence which cannot be brushed aside.

" . . . If Stalin actually was following Lenin up to his death, how then explain the fact that the last document dictated by Lenin, on the eve of his second stroke, was a curt letter to Stalin, a few lines in all, breaking off all personal and comradely relations? This single event of its kind in the life of Lenin, a sharp break with one of his close associates, must have had very serious psychological causes, and would be, to say the least, incomprehensible in relation to a pupil who 'fervently' followed his teacher up to the end. . . ."⁸

Trotsky has rejected the hypothesis that Lenin's last letter to Stalin might have proceeded from one non compos mentis.

" . . . That break with Stalin did not drop out of a clear sky. It flowed from a long series of preceding conflicts, both matters of principle and upon practical matters, and it sets forth the whole bitterness of these conflicts in a tragic light."⁹

Lenin's Characterization of Stalin. Finally a few words about Lenin's conception of Stalin's character, as viewed by Trotsky:

"Lenin undoubtedly valued highly certain of Stalin's traits. His firmness of character, tenacity, stubbornness, even ruthlessness and craftiness -- qualities necessary in a war and consequently in its general staff. But Lenin was far from thinking that these gifts, even on an extraordinary scale, were sufficient for the leadership of the party and the state. Lenin saw in Stalin a revolutionist, but not a statesman in the grand style. Theory had too high an importance for Lenin in a political struggle. Nobody considered Stalin a theoretician, and he himself up to 1924 never made any pretense to this vocation. On the contrary, his weak theoretical grounding was too well known in a small circle. Stalin is not acquainted with the West; he does not know any foreign language. He was never brought into the discussion of problems of the international workers' movement. And finally Stalin was not -- this is less important, but not without significance -- either a writer or an orator in the proper sense of the word. His articles, in spite of all the author's caution, are loaded not only with theoretic blunders and naivetes, but also with crude sins against the Russian language. Stalin's value in the eyes of Lenin was all comprised in the sphere of party administration and machine maneuvering. But even here Lenin made substantial exceptions, and these increased during the last period."

" . . . Stalin meanwhile was more and more broadly and indiscriminately

⁸Trotsky, The Suppressed Testament of Lenin, p. 18. Also see Trotsky, The Stalin School of Falsification, p. 76.

⁹Trotsky, The Suppressed Testament of Lenin, p. 18.

using the possibilities of the revolutionary dictatorship for the recruiting of people personally obligated and devoted to him. In his position as general secretary he became the dispenser of favor and fortune. Here the foundation was laid for an inevitable conflict. Lenin gradually lost his moral trust in Stalin. . . . "1

Trotsky's Evaluation of Stalin

Theoretical differences aside, Trotsky has not held the abilities or character of Stalin in very high esteem. The general impression received from Trotsky's multiplicity of references, casual and direct, is that Stalin was never looked upon by anyone as a Marxian theoretician; his opinions were never seriously regarded (although he proved invaluable at times in carrying out policies already laid down by Lenin and the Central Committee); and that, all in all, he was a non-entity and a very mediocre person who took advantage of the illness and incapacity of Lenin to gain control of the Central Committee by building up for himself a personal following.¹

Prior to 1917. According to Trotsky, who has called it the undisputed record, at least during 1902-1903 Stalin was an active Menshevik.² In 1905, he joined the Bolsheviks, where his record in those early years was absolutely blank.

"In 1905, Stalin was a member of the Bolsheviks and took an active part in the struggle. What were his views and actions in 1905? What were his views as to the character of the revolution and its perspectives? To our knowledge, there are no documents in circulation on this score. No articles, speeches or resolutions by Stalin have been printed. Why? Evidently because a republication of Stalin's articles or letters for that period could only damage his political biography. There is no other explanation for the stubborn oblivion that enshrouds the past of the 'leader'."³

From 1907 to 1917, there is likewise nothing to indicate that Stalin had formulated any contributions to the theoretical basis of his activities.

¹ Ibid., pp. 19-20.

¹ Trotsky, The Stalin School of Falsification, pp. 179-198.

² Ibid., p. 180.

³ Ibid., pp. 180-181.

Throughout this entire period he enjoyed complete anonymity and obscurity and was "a vulgar conciliationist".⁴

"From the time of the first revolution, Stalin led the life of a professional revolutionist. Jail, exiles, escaped. But for the entire period of reaction (1907-1911) we do not find a single document containing Stalin's formulation of his own estimate of the situation and its perspectives. It is impossible for them not to have been preserved, even if only in the archives of the police department. Why have they not appeared in print? The reason is clear as noonday: They are of such a nature as renders it impossible to strengthen the silly characterization of theoretical and political infallibility that the apparatus is creating for Stalin, i.e., for itself."⁵

Stalin spent the four years preceding the outbreak of the Russian Revolution as an exile in Turukhansk. This was a period of ferment, of struggle. Yet, according to Trotsky, Stalin had nothing to show for it.

". . .What part did Stalin take in this struggle? These four years of exile should have been the years of intense intellectual activity. . . . It is hardly conceivable that Stalin did not write anything during four years of exile on the basic problems of war, the International and the revolution. Yet one would seek in vain for any traces of Stalin's intellectual labors during those four amazing years. . . . Does this mean that Stalin wrote nothing at all? No, it means nothing of the sort. That would be utterly improbable. But it does mean that among everything he had written during the four years there is nothing, literally nothing, that could be utilized today to re-enforce his reputation. . . ."⁶

In March 1917, Stalin took essentially a Menshevik position on the question of the support of the Provisional Government.⁷ He declared in part:

"In so far as the Provisional Government fortifies the steps of the revolution, to that extent we must support it; but, in so far as it is counter-revolutionary, support to the Provisional Government is not permissible."⁸

Trotsky commented thus on Stalin's statement:

"That is exactly what Dan said. After all, what other words can be used to defend a bourgeois government in the eyes of the revolutionary masses?"⁹

⁴Ibid., p. 152.

⁵Ibid., pp. 181-182.

⁶Ibid., pp. 184-185.

⁷Ibid., pp. 186-188; 239-240.

⁸Ibid., p. 187.

⁹Idem.

The October Revolution. Trotsky has charged that during the October insurrection, when the fate of the revolution was hanging in the balance, the part played by Stalin was utterly insignificant.

"The role of Lenin, of course, needs no illumination. . . . The decisive night, from the 25th to the 26th, Kamenev and I spent together in the quarters of the Military Revolutionary Committee, answering questions and giving orders by telephone. But stretch my memory as I will, I cannot answer the question in just what consisted, during those decisive days, the role of Stalin. It never once happened that I turned to him for advice or cooperation. He never showed the slightest initiative. He never advanced a single independent proposal. This fact no 'Marxian historian' of the new style can alter."¹

Trotskyists contend that Stalin himself has acknowledged the debt due to Trotsky for his part in the October Revolution. In Stalin's collected writings on the October Revolution, an official Communist Party publication, the following item is found, written by Stalin and taken from Pravda, No. 241, November 6, 1918:

". . . All practical work in connection with the organization of the uprising was done under the immediate direction of Comrade Trotsky, the president of the Petrograd Soviet. It can be stated with certainty that the Party is indebted primarily and principally to Comrade Trotsky for the rapid going over of the garrison to the side of the Soviet and the efficient manner in which the work of the Military-Revolutionary Committee was organized. The principal assistants of Comrade Trotsky were Comrades Antonov and Pidvoisky."²

Trotsky has refuted the allegation of Stalin that a Military Revolutionary Center of which Stalin was a member was the nerve center of the insurrection; he has declared that this center was made a "constituent part of the Revolutionary Soviet Committee"³ of which he (Trotsky) was already the chairman.⁴

"From a historical distance the October insurrection seems much more planned and monolithic than what it proved to be in reality. In fact, there were lacking neither vacillations, search for solutions, nor impulsive beginnings which led nowhere. Thus, at the meeting of the Central Committee on the 16th of October, improvised in one night, in the absence of the most

¹Ibid., p. 14.

²Stalin, The October Revolution, p. 30.

³Trotsky, The Stalin School of Falsification, p. 15.

⁴Idem.

active leaders of the Petrograd Soviet, it was decided to round out the general-staff of the insurrection with an auxiliary 'Center' created by the party and composed of Sverdlov, Stalin, Bubnov, Uritsky and Dzerzhinsky. At the very same time at the meeting of the Petrograd Soviet, a Revolutionary Military Committee was formed which from the moment of its appearance did so much work towards the preparation of the insurrection that the 'Center', appointed the night before, was forgotten by everybody, even by its own members. There were more than a few of such improvisations in the whirlwind of this period. Stalin never belonged to the Military Revolutionary Committee, did not appear at Smolny, staff headquarters of the revolution, had nothing to do with the practical preparation of the insurrection, but was to be found editing Pravda and writing drab articles, which were very little read. During the following years, nobody once mentioned the 'Practical Center'. In memoirs of participants in the insurrection -- and there is no shortage of these -- the name of Stalin is not once mentioned. Stalin himself, in an article on the October insurrection, in the Pravda of November 7, 1918, describing all the groups and individuals who took part in the insurrection, does not say a word about the 'Practical Center'. Nevertheless, the old minutes, discovered by chance in 1924 and falsely interpreted, have served as a base for the bureaucratic legend. In every compilation, bibliographical guide, even in recently edited school books, the revolutionary 'Center' has a prominent place with Stalin at its head. Furthermore, no one has tried, not even out of a sense of decency, to explain where and how this 'Center' established its headquarters, to whom it gave orders and what they were, and whether minutes were taken, where they are. . . ."⁵

Brest-Litovsk. On the Brest-Litovsk Peace, Stalin floundered hopelessly, Trotsky avers. In the early sessions devoted to the question, according to the existing records of the Central Committee in 1917, Stalin declared that he favored the Trotsky formula of no peace and no war. His words were clear:

" ' . . . the way out the difficult situation was provided us by the middle point of view -- the position of Trotsky.' . . . "¹

In the end, he voted with Lenin without knowing what it was all about.

" . . . What was Stalin's position? As usual, he had none. He was simply waiting and calculating. 'The old man is still hoping for peace,' he would nod to me, referring to Lenin. 'He won't get any.' . . . In the deciding vote, he joined Lenin. It was not until several years later that he worked out a semblance of a 'point of view' for himself on the events of Brest-Litovsk, and that was simply in the interests of his struggle against Trotskyism."²

Stalin as Military Leader. Stalin's role as a war leader was equally

⁵ Trotsky, "Art and Politics," Partisan Review (August-September, 1938), Vol. V, No. 3, p. 6.

¹ Trotsky, The Stalin School of Falsification, p. 193.

² Trotsky, My Life, p. 393; The Stalin School of Falsification, pp. 193-195.

unimpressive, according to Trotsky. Although Stalin finally received the Order of the Red Flag along with Trotsky and others, there was no enthusiasm about awarding it to him. It was done on the suggestion of Lenin to placate him. Trotsky has quoted Bukharin's explanation to Kalinin to substantiate his own contentions:

" . . . 'Can't you understand? This is Lenin's idea. Stalin can't live unless he has what some one else has. He will never forgive it.'"¹

Stalin, on the contrary, it appears, at one time held Trotsky's abilities as a soldier in high esteem, for in the issue of Pravda for November 6, 1918, he was loud in his praises of the war commissar:

" 'All the work of practical organization of the insurrection was carried out under the direct leadership of the Chairman of the Petrograd Soviet, comrade Trotsky. We can say with certainty that the swift passing of the garrison to the side of the Soviet and the bold execution of the work of the Military Revolutionary Committee the party owes principally and above all to comrade Trotsky.' "²

But after Lenin's death, Stalin changed his mind, for he then wrote thus:

" 'Comrade Trotsky played no particular role in the party or the October insurrection and could not do so, being a man comparatively new to our party in the October period.' (J. Stalin; Trotskyism or Leninism, pp. 68f.)"³

During the subsequent struggle against the White Russians, Trotsky found it necessary in his position as army chieftain to order the recall of Stalin from Tsaritsin,⁴ in the interest of military efficiency.

"Every day I would receive from the high command or the front commands such complaints against Tsaritsin as: it is impossible to get executions of an order, it is impossible to find out what is going on there, it is impossible to get an answer to an inquiry. . . . The situation became intolerable; I decided to enforce order in Tsaritsin. After a new clash between the high command and Tsaritsin, I obtained Stalin's recall. . . ."⁵

¹Trotsky, My Life, p. 433.

²Trotsky, The Stalin School of Falsification, p. 87.

³Ibid., p. 13.

⁴Trotsky, My Life, pp. 441-443; The Stalin School of Falsification, pp.209-214.

⁵Trotsky, My Life, p. 441.

In an endeavor to establish Stalin as a great military genius in the eyes of the younger generation, an article, "Stalin and the Red Army", appeared in Pravda from the pen of Voroshilov. A detailed refutation has been written by a Trotsky disciple, N. Markin.⁶ -

Markin presents, as an example of the Stalin School of Falsification, the problem of the military command on the Southern Front, one of the most important in the bitter struggle to defend the Soviet Union. Voroshilov had declared:

" 'The situation had to be saved, so the C. C. sent comrade Stalin to the Southern Front in his capacity as a member of the Military Council . . . '." ⁷

He further stated that Stalin had accepted provided that Trotsky be restrained from interference with his work.⁸ Markin has characterized this as an unmitigated lie from beginning to end.⁹ The truth of the matter is that the Political Bureau placed Trotsky completely in charge of this front and suggested that he concentrate his efforts thereon. Markin has presented a document signed by the Political Bureau of the Central Committee to this effect.¹⁰

On another occasion Stalin was ordered to the Caucasian front, where he failed to go on grounds of ill-health and overwork. Yet Voroshilov has spoken of the "rescue" made by Stalin on that front.¹¹

Of these numberless instances, Markin has concluded:

"Such are the facts. Similar facts can be adduced to any number! That Voroshilov today has to 'refresh' inventions only proves that despite everything these facts are still too fresh in the memory of the party."¹²

6 N. Markin, Stalin and the Red Army; appended to Trotsky, The Stalin School of Falsification, pp. 205-229. (N. Markin is the pseudonym of Leon Sedoff, deceased son of Leon Trotsky.)

⁷Ibid., p. 218.

⁸Idem.

⁹Ibid., pp. 218-219.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 220-221.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 227-228.

¹²Ibid., p. 229.

Stalin's Bureaucratism. Trotsky has attributed Stalin's ultimate success to the assiduity with which he was able to pick out for bureaucratic and important posts men whose chief qualification for office was their loyalty to Stalin and their opposition to Trotskyism. During the life of Lenin this was carried out secretly; after the death of Lenin, it became an open matter:

" . . . Responsible workers in the party and state were systematically selected by the single criterion: Against Trotsky. During the prolonged 'interregnum' created by Lenin's illness, this work was carried on tirelessly but still under cover, so that in the event of Lenin's recovery, the mined bridges could be preserved intact. . . . Lenin's death freed the conspirators and allowed them to come out into the open. This process of personal selection descended a rung lower. It now became impossible to obtain a post as director of a plant, as secretary of a party local, as chairman of rural executive committee, as bookkeeper or typist, unless one had proved one's anti-Trotskyism.

"The members of the party who raised their voices in protest against this conspiracy became the victims of treacherous attacks, made for reasons entirely remote and frequently invented. . . . A strenuous artificial selection was being effected, a selection not of the best but of the most suitable. The general policy became one of replacement of independent and gifted men by mediocrities who owed their posts entirely to the apparatus. It was as the supreme expression of the mediocrity of the apparatus that Stalin himself rose to his position."¹

Victor Serge, another member of the Left Opposition who has characterized himself as " . . . the sole survivor among the early administrative staff of the C. I."² has attributed Stalin's rise to power to his ability to unite the opposition to his common foe (Trotsky) and then in turn destroy the united opposition, section by section:

" . . . Lenin appreciated him sufficiently to mistrust him a good deal and fear him a little. 'He lacks the most elementary honesty,' he said. He attained to power by intrigue in the bureaus and congresses, first siding with Zinoviev, Kamenev, Rykov, Tomsy and Bukharin against Trotsky; then with Voroshilov, Kalinin, Ordjonikidze against Rykov, Tomsy and Bukharin; now sole master through the murder or exile of all the leaders of the revolution and the total destruction of the party which made possible the years from 1917 to 1923."³

Falsification of History. Trotsky has regarded it as an extremely sad

¹Trotsky, My Life, pp. 500-501.

²Serge, From Lenin to Stalin, p. 33.

³Ibid., p. 79.

commentary upon Stalin and his methods that he has found it necessary to cover up his misdeeds by falsifying records, making deletions, re-writing Soviet history,¹ and finally, despite Lenin's strong injunctions, wiping out all opposition, including the entire old guard Bolsheviks, by a bloody purge.²

Trotsky has pointed to the high calibre of the Opposition whom Stalin has hounded and shot down. Far from being spies, traitors, fascists and saboteurs, they are sincere men of great courage, and revolutionists of the first rank. Had they chosen to take the path of least resistance and play along with Stalin, had they been careerists, functionaries, job-seekers, men-about-town, etc., they would have found it infinitely more profitable, and would have been well rewarded.³

Stalin a Revisionist. Trotsky has minced few words in dealing with the doctrines of Stalin. Although these will be dealt with subsequently, it should be noted at this point that Trotsky has ridiculed the contentions made that the policies of Stalin represent "extensions" of Leninism. On the contrary he brands them as revisionistic, and as remote from Leninism as they could possibly be. His characterization of Stalinism as the Thermidorian reaction, by analogy with the French Revolution, will also be discussed later.

" . . . History does not proceed in a straight line. It has temporarily run into the blind alleys of Stalin."¹

" . . . At great turning points men frequently find it easier to abandon their conceptions than the habitual phraseology. That is the general law of all those whose ideological colors fade. While revising Lenin in almost all essential points, the leadership passed off this revisionism as a development of Leninism and at the same time characterized the international revolutionary essence of Leninism as Trotskyism. It did this not only in order to

¹For examples, see Trotsky, The Stalin School of Falsification, pp. xxxiv, xxxix-xi; 102-105; 199-203.

²Ibid., pp. xi-xxv.

³Ibid., pp. 136-137.

¹Trotsky, The Permanent Revolution, p. 85.

mask itself both outwardly and inwardly but also in order to adapt itself more easily to the process of its own down-sliding."²

". . . The last five years constitute in their entirety a period devoted to the scholastic distortion of Marxism and Leninism, to their slavish adaptation to the requirements of political back-sliding and the spirit of bureaucratic usurpation. 'Allow the kulak to grow into socialism', 'enrich yourselves!', the recommendations 'not to leap over stages', the 'bloc of four classes', the 'two-class parties', 'socialism in one country' -- all these ideas and slogans of Centrism sliding to the Right have inevitably engendered the application of articles of the Penal Code against the real disciples of Marx and of Lenin."³

Trotsky's Characterization of Stalin. Here are a few of Trotsky's more pointed characterizations of Stalin:

"If one looks into it more deeply, one sees that Stalin, from the very moment that he came into close contact with Lenin, and especially since the October revolution, had always been suppressed and impotent in his opposition to him, and was all the more irritable because of it. Because of his enormous envy and ambition, Stalin could not help feeling at every step his intellectual and moral inferiority. It seems that he tried to get closer to me. Not until much later did I realize the meaning of attempts to establish something approaching familiarity between us. But I was repelled by those qualities that were his strength on the wave of decline -- the narrowness of his interests, his empiricism, the coarseness of his psychological make-up, his peculiar cynicism of a provincial whom Marxism has freed from many prejudices without, however, replacing them with a philosophical outlook thoroughly thought out and mentally assimilated. Judged by some of his casual remarks, which at the time seemed accidental but actually were not, Stalin was trying to find in me support against Lenin, whose control he found so irksome. At every attempt of this sort, I instinctively drew away from him and walked on. I believe that the sources of his cold and at first cowardly but thoroughly treacherous hatred of me are to be found in this. He systematically gathered about him either men who were like him, or simple fellows who wanted to live without being bothered by subtle problems, or those whose feelings had been hurt. The first, the second, and the third groups all were numerous.

"There is no doubt that in routine work it was more convenient for Lenin to depend on Stalin, Zinoviev or Kamenev rather than on me. Lenin was always trying to save his time as well as every one else's. . . . Lenin needed practical, obedient assistants. I was unsuited to the role, and I could only be grateful to Lenin for not offering me the deputyship. Far from considering this a lack of confidence in me, I saw in it on the contrary a definite and not unflattering appreciation of me and of our mutual relations. . . ."⁴

²Trotsky, Third International After Lenin, p. 164.

³Ibid., p. 244.

⁴Trotsky, My Life, pp. 476-478.

" . . . He is gifted with practicality, a strong will, and persistence in carrying out his aims. His political horizon is restricted, his theoretical equipment primitive. His work of compilation, 'The Foundations of Leninism,' in which he made an attempt to pay tribute to the theoretical traditions of the party, is full of sophomoric errors. His ignorance of foreign languages compels ^{him} to follow the political life of other countries at second-hand. His mind is stubbornly empirical, and devoid of creative imagination. To the leading group of the party (in the wider circles he was not known at all) he always seemed a man destined to play second and third fiddle. And the fact that to-day he is playing first is not so much a summing-up of the man as it is of this transitional period of political backsliding in the country. Helvetius said it long ago: 'Every period has its great men, and if these are lacking, it invents them.' Stalinism is above all else the automatic work of the impersonal apparatus on the decline of the revolution."⁵

In comparing Stalin with Kamenev (who does not concern us here), Trotsky held:

"Stalin was a totally different type of Bolshevik, both in his psychological makeup and in the character of his party work: a strong, but theoretically and politically primitive, organizer. Whereas Kamenev as a publicist stayed for many years abroad with Lenin, where stood the theoretical forge of the party, Stalin as a so-called 'practical', without theoretical viewpoint, without broad political interests, and without a knowledge of foreign languages, was inseparable from the Russian soil. . . . Stalin was distinguished among the practicals for energy, persistence, and inventiveness in the matter of moves behind the scenes. Where Kamenev as a natural result of his character felt 'embarrassed' by the practical conclusions of Bolshevism, Stalin on the contrary was inclined to defend the practical conclusions which he adopted without any mitigation whatever, uniting insistence with rudeness.

" . . . Stalin, the empiric, was open to alien influences not on the side of will but on the side of intellect. Thus it was that this publicist without decision, and this organizer without intellectual horizon, carried Bolshevism in March 1917 to the very boundaries of Menshevism. Stalin proved even less capable than Kamenev of developing an independent position in the Executive Committee, which he entered as a representative of the party Sukhanov says in his Notes of the Revolution: 'Among the Bolsheviks, besides Kamenev, there appeared in the Executive Committee in those days Stalin. . . . During the time of his modest activity in the Executive Committee he gave me the impression -- and not only me -- of a gray spot which would sometimes give out a dim and inconsequential light. There is really nothing more to be said about him.' Although Sukhanov obviously underestimates Stalin as a whole, he nevertheless correctly describes his political characterlessness in the Executive Committee of the Compromisers."⁶

⁵Ibid., p. 506.

⁶Trotsky, History of the Russian Revolution, Vol. I, pp. 288-289.

"Here are a few milestones in the political biography of Stalin. They provide a sufficiently distinct portrait of a man in whom energy, will and resoluteness are combined with empiricism, myopia, an organic inclination to opportunist decisions in great questions, personal rudeness, disloyalty and a readiness to abuse power in order to suppress the party."⁷

The Moscow Trials

It is again in order to state that the Trotskyist position on the controversy over the innocence or guilt of Trotsky (and others) in the Moscow Trials of 1936-38 cannot be dwelt on in any great detail here. Considerable literature has appeared from the Trotskyist press, to which the reader is referred.¹ Only a brief statement of its thesis will be presented.

The general position taken by the Trotskyists is that these trials constitute one of the greatest frame-ups in history in order to remove the last trace of opposition to Stalin; that the leading figures were among Lenin's closest collaborators; that their past record of achievements in behalf of Marxism and the international working class makes the charges of conspiracy with the Fascists and Nazis for the overthrow of the Soviet Union and the restoration of capitalism utterly fantastic; that the confessions were the last gestures of doomed men made to save others from sharing their inevitable fate.

The Trotskyists have offered in evidence the investigations of the Commission of Inquiry headed by John Dewey. The reports, comprising two volumes

⁷Trotsky, The Stalin School of Falsification, p. 198.

¹John Dewey (Chairman), The Case of Leon Trotsky; Not Guilty; "Truth is on the March." (Reports of the Commission of Inquiry into the charges made against Leon Trotsky in the Moscow Trials.) Heisler, "The First Two Moscow Trials". Schachtman, Behind the Moscow Trial. Serge, Russia Twenty Years After, pp. 211-237. "The Editor's Comments," New International (April, 1938), Vol. IV, No. 4, pp. 99-102.

Socialist Appeal, Oct. 1, 1936; Dec. 18, 1937; Dec. 25, 1937; March 5, 1938; March 12, 1938; March 19, 1938; March 26, 1938.

Trotsky, New York Times, March 3, 1938, p. 15; March 9, 1938, p. 8; March 9, 1938, p. 14.

of over one thousand pages, have substantiated their contentions in toto, Trotskyists allege.

The following are the most significant conclusions taken from the Committee's Summary of Findings:

"(16) We are convinced that the alleged letters in which Trotsky conveyed alleged conspiratorial instructions to the various defendants in the Moscow trials never existed; and that the testimony concerning them is sheer fabrication.

(17) We find that Trotsky throughout his whole career has always been a consistent opponent of individual terror. The Commission further finds that Trotsky never instructed any of the defendants or witnesses in the Moscow trials to assassinate any political opponent.

(18) We find that Trotsky never instructed the defendants or witnesses in the Moscow trials to engage in sabotage, wrecking, and diversion. On the contrary, he has always been a consistent advocate of the building up of socialist industry and agriculture in the Soviet Union and has criticized the present regime on the basis that its activities were harmful to the building up of socialist economy in Russia. He is not in favor of sabotage as a method of opposition to any political regime.

(19) We find that Trotsky never instructed any of the accused or witnesses in the Moscow trials to enter into agreements with foreign powers against the Soviet Union. On the contrary, he has always uncompromisingly advocated the defense of the U.S.S.R. He has always been a most forthright ideological opponent of the fascism represented by the foreign powers with which he is accused of having conspired.

(20) On the basis of all the evidence we find that Trotsky never recommended, plotted, or attempted the restoration of capitalism in the U.S.S.R. On the contrary, he has always uncompromisingly opposed the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union and its existence anywhere else.

(21) We find that the Prosecutor fantastically falsified Trotsky's role before, during and after the October Revolution.

Conclusions

(22) We therefore find the Moscow trials to be frame-ups.

(23) We therefore find Trotsky and Sedev not guilty.

John Dewey, Chairman

John R. Chamberlain

Alfred Rosmer

E. A. Ross

Otto Ruehle

Benjamin Stolberg

Wendelin Thomas

Carlo Tresca

F. Zamora

Suzanne La Follette, Secretary

John F. Finerty, Counsel, Concurring.

New York, September 21, 1937."2

PART II

THE DE LEON MOVEMENT

CHAPTER IV

SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY: HISTORY AND PRINCIPLES

History¹

The Socialist Labor party was born amidst the strife and dissension which marked the death of the First International in the United States in 1876. In 1874, the Social Democratic Working-Men's Party of North America was formed by the secession of several branches of the American section of the International (known in the United States as the North American Federation of the International Working-Men's Association). The basic issue seemed to be whether or not the International should co-operate with non-socialist elements in the American labor movement, on which issue the International had taken a negative stand. The influx of new strength into the Social Democratic Working-Men's Party and the consolidation of several organizations resulted in a change of name in 1876 to the Working-Men's Party of the United States, which in turn became the Socialist Labor party in 1877.

The Socialist Labor party has been at work continuously since its organization. Although it has weathered several storms, notably the Socialist party split in 1900 and the routing of the I.W.W. elements from within the party in 1908, it is still active on the American political scene.² In the 1936 National

¹There is no single publication of the Socialist Labor party which gives a complete, detailed, and authoritative account of its early history prior to 1890. For this period, however, the following are useful: Hillquit, History of Socialism in the United States, pp. 175-301. Fine, Labor and Farmer Parties in the United States -- 1828-1928, pp. 88-117. For the period following 1890, the following Socialist Labor party publications are available: Symposium, Daniel DeLeon, The Man and His Work. Kuhn and Johnson, Socialist Labor Party, 1890-1930.

²Petersen, Revolutionary Milestones, passim.

elections, it placed a presidential ticket in the field. Aiken, its nominee, received 12,729 votes.³

The leading light and guiding spirit of the Socialist Labor party, from 1890 until his death in 1914, was Daniel De Leon. He is credited with making several notable contributions to the Marxian movement: he brought Marxism to the United States and made the American workers Marx-conscious; he attempted to give Marxism an American basis.⁴ Since his death, the theoretical basis of the party's activities has been continued by Olive M. Johnson, Henry Kuhn and Arnold Petersen, among others, who claim they are carrying on the principles and traditions of De Leon.

International Affiliations

The Socialist Labor party has at present made no international commitments or affiliations. De Leon's relations with the Second International and the position of the party with respect to the Third International will be briefly discussed.

The S.L.P. and the Second (Socialist) International. Daniel De Leon attended many Congresses of the Second International as American representative of the S.L.P. From 1900 on, his entire career as delegate was to fight the opportunism and class collaboration policies, which he declared were paralyzing the Socialist International.

The famous Kautsky resolution was introduced at the Paris Convention of the Second International in 1900. In essence its purpose was to permit European Socialists to occupy portfolios in capitalist governments with the consent of their respective parties.¹ The controversy raged around the question of whether

³New York Times, December 10, 1936, p. 13.

⁴For an account of De Leon's life consult the following S.L.P. publications: Symposium, op. cit. Petersen, Daniel De Leon. Raisky, Daniel De Leon.

¹Symposium, Daniel De Leon, II, pp. 86-88, 104-106.

the proposed collaboration was merely a matter of tactics (and hence permissible) or whether it involved an abandonment of first principles.² The S.L.P. took the latter position.

De Leon attended the 1904 Congress of the Second International held at Amsterdam. He bitterly attacked the Kautsky resolution as class collaboration and opportunism, and urged the passage of another resolution repealing Kautsky's: ". . . That in fully developed capitalist countries like America, the working class cannot, without betrayal of the cause of the proletariat, fill any political office other than they conquer for and by themselves."³ When the vote was taken, De Leon cast the only vote in its favor. This clearly indicated the sentiment of the Congress. On the whole, the influence of the S.L.P. in the Second International was slight; the Socialist party was regarded as more representative of its policies in the United States.⁴

Raisky has thus summed up De Leon's participation in the work of the Second International:

"De Leon was an internationalist. The sharp weapon of his criticism he directed not only against the native opportunism but also against its manifestation in the international labor movement. De Leon belonged to the consistent left wing of the Second International. De Leon attended the following congresses of the Second International, the Congress of Zurich (1893), Amsterdam (1904), Stuttgart (1907), and Copenhagen (1910) -- L.R.] He was one of the first to raise arms against Kautsky and expose his opportunism when Kautsky was still at the zenith of his revolutionary fame."⁵

The S.L.P. has held that the World War vindicated De Leon's intransigence. The party is no longer affiliated with the Second International.

"The Second International was merely an enlargement of the German Social Democracy which gave it its pinkish color. Most of the affiliated organizations, including (and very emphatically so) the S. P. of America, were merely the satellites revolving around the German Social Democracy. The end of its influence came with the World War, the total collapse of the Second International. This was the supreme vindication of Marxian tactics -- his voice thundering

²Ibid., p. 87-88.

³Ibid., p. 105.

⁴Raisky, op. cit., p. 29.

⁶Ibid., p. 27.

against reform, compromise and political trading which culminated in 'Social Patriotism', could fairly be heard above the crash of the collapsing ruins."⁶

The S.L.P. and the Third International. In January, 1919, when the Bolsheviki issued the summons for a new International, the Socialist Labor Party, because of its Left tendencies, was among the thirty-eight groups invited.¹

A detailed account of the subsequent relations between the Socialist Labor Party and the Third International is not available. The party's general position on the Third International, however, was made clear in a pamphlet published in 1926.² In general, the following propositions were developed: The Socialist Labor party has endorsed the principles of the Russian revolution, but: (1) The Comintern has not understood the American problem. It has foolishly dictated and supported the disastrous policies of the American Communist party. (2) The Socialist Labor party alone has shown a keen understanding of the proper policies to be pursued in the United States. (3) The best thing for the Comintern to do would be to keep hands off the American scene and look on sympathetically.

These propositions were couched in unusually strong and colorful terms.

The Manifesto of the S.L.P. stated:

"The Socialist Labor Party yields to none in the unqualified endorsement of the Russian Revolution; it yields to none in the full recognition of the immeasurable service which the Russian comrades have rendered and are rendering to the proletariat of the world; it yields to none in its admiration of the steadfastness with which the Russian workers have defended the revolution against a world of foes and under conditions well-nigh unbearable. Yet, and because it values so highly the achievements of the Russian Revolution, it will yield to none who, either because they do not understand or because they are animated by fireworks emotionalism, would carry confusion into the American Movement of Labor when more and ever more clarity is the need of the hour. It will not yield to those who would seek to sway that movement with the empty 'revolutionary' phrase; and, least of all, will it yield to those who would seek to establish an entente cordiale with Anarcho-Syndicalism. . . ."³

⁶Johnson, Karl Marx, Forty Years After, pp. 8-9.

¹Fainsod, International Socialism and the World War, p. 201.

²Socialist Labor Party, Socialist Labor Party and the Third International, passim.

³S.L.P., Manifesto of the Socialist Labor Party, p. 24.

In criticizing the Comintern, the S.L.P. did not pull its punches:

". . . The Communist International never was and is not now an international organization in the true sense of the word. It is a Russian organization with all the drawbacks which the struggle of Russia against a hostile capitalist world imposes. Its 'affiliated' organizations were not affiliates; they were satellites called into being by the first swing of the Russian Revolution, and then, when the social revolution tarried elsewhere and did not come to a head, they were kept alive by the pap of subsidy and other artificial means. Under such conditions an international congress is not and cannot be a gathering of equals held together by a common revolutionary principle but free to pursue tactics and shape policies in each country in accordance with the conditions economic and political there prevailing, never losing sight of the historic background of the country and all that it implies. As it was, Moscow simply issued orders and the satellites tried to obey them, often with disastrous results to themselves,"4

"Taking all the foregoing facts into consideration we can only say to the comrades of Russia and the Communist International:

"Keep your hands off the revolutionary movement of America. You know less than nothing of American industrial conditions under which we have to work and organize. You are totally ignorant of American history and what this has done to shape the psychology of America's working class. For this we do not blame you. We simply state facts and the facts conspire to make you enormous blunders whenever you touch upon matters American. And what aggravates this condition is that circumstances have conspired to furnish you with information on America that is unreliable, known to be shallow, inspired by ignorance only, when it is not utterly dishonest. So we repeat, comrades of Russia, hands off the American revolutionary movement. You may show genius at home and in your diplomatic relations with international capitalism but in matters that concern the labor movement abroad, America in particular, you are babes in the woods.

"We speak strongly for we feel strongly. We feel that the injury the above-related meddlesomeness has done to the movement in America will take long years and much labor to repair."5

The upshot of all this has been that, even as the Socialist Labor party spurned further affiliation with the Second International because of its opportunism and class collaboration policies, so also has it rejected the Third International because of its tactics upon the American scene. The net result has been that the Socialist Labor party is affiliated with neither International.

"The S.L.P. does not belong to the Third International because, in the first place, the Third International is not an International in the true sense, since the only real party in it is the Russian Communist party, and most of the rest are practically 'burlesque bolsheviks' hanging on to the skirts of Moscow.

⁴S.L.P., Socialist Labor Party and the Third International, pp. 9-10.

⁵Ibid., pp. 27-28.

Secondly, because the Third International insists on forcing the tactics evolved from the backward economic conditions of Russia on more advanced countries where they do not fit, to the detriment of the movement in such countries."⁶

The following resolution on the international Socialist movement was adopted at the 19th National Convention of the Socialist Labor party.

"Resolved, that the Socialist Labor Party . . . declares itself compelled to hold its solitary position, awaiting the time when a clear-cut classconscious Marxian Socialist movement shall have arisen in other lands ready to reject, on the one hand, the 'bourgeois reform socialism' of the Second International, and, on the other, the saviors of 'the remnants of bourgeois democracy', viz., the Anarcho-Communism that has attached itself to and operates under the label of the Third International . . ."⁷

Principles of Marxism

The Socialist Labor party has regarded itself as an orthodox party, the party of "Twentieth Century Marxism", and the true expounder of Marxism.¹ Throughout its literature, such statements are found from time to time:

"The Socialist Labor Party is the oldest and the only Marxian organization in the United States. . . ."²

"The Socialist Labor Party is a national political party consisting of class-conscious working men and women who apply Marxian economics in the American labor movement."³

"The unique position of the S.L.P. is the result of its scientific Marxian postures. . . ."⁴

". . . Were Marx in the United States today, what would he say? It is not difficult to imagine [Here follows an S.L.P. exposition of Marxism -- W.I.]

⁶ Socialist Labor Party, Communist Heckling, p. 2.

⁷ Weekly People, May 9, 1936, p. 3.

¹ Petersen, Proletarian Democracy vs. Dictatorships and Despotism, p. 15.

² Socialist Labor Party, The Socialist Labor Party and the Third International, p. 15.

³ Socialist Labor Party, May Day Leaflet (1933).

⁴ Petersen, Revolutionary Milestones, p. 27.

"These, we know, would be Marx's conclusions in fully developed capitalist America, in line with his own teachings and the principles he established. And these conclusions are accepted, unreservedly by the 'executor' of Marx's 'will', the Socialist Labor Party and that Party alone. By the same token, all other parties and groups become definitely anti-Marxian, which is to say, anti-working class."⁵

According, therefore, to the S.L.P., Daniel De Leon stands alone upon the American scene as a Marxian theoretician:

" . . . The one man, and the only one, who has added qualitatively to the science of Marxism, is the American scholar, student and proletarian organizer, Daniel De Leon"⁶

In discussing Marx's Theory of Value and Surplus Value, the Materialist Conception of History, and the Class Struggle, De Leon has more or less followed the orthodox pattern of Kautsky.⁷

But one should not infer from this that the political program of Kautsky was endorsed by the S.L.P. The followers of De Leon have condemned him in very strong terms.

"In life he was the quintessence of opportunism in the European labor movement. Nor was he less culpable because he knew Marx almost by heart. Indeed, it would be better to say he knew Marx 'by rote', for his record of compromise with principle indicates that he paid scant attention to the substance of Marx's teachings and gives credence to Lenin's caustic charge that he was a 'learned armchair fool'.⁸

In expounding his theory of industrial unionism and the conquest of state power, De Leon made his original contributions to Marxism, according to his followers. One of his disciples has thus characterized his contributions to Marxism:

⁵Petersen, Karl Marx and Marxism, pp. 30, 33.

⁶Petersen, Proletarian Democracy vs. Dictatorships and Despotism, p. 17.

⁷De Leon, As To Politics, p. v. Petersen, Proletarian Democracy vs. Dictatorships and Despotism, pp. 18-20.

⁸Weekly People, Oct. 29, 1938, p. 4.

" . . . the essential quality of De Leon's contribution to Marxian thought falls into two categories: (1) The contributions to the theory of economic organization, the integrally organized Industrial Union, a deduction from the transformation to socialized production as it has developed in America, with its capitalist organization of the workers for production by industries instead of as heretofore by crafts; and, (2) revolutionary tactic, the intellectual and moral driving force of this transformation, the coordinated employment of the revolutionary political party of the proletariat for the abolition of the Political State, with the use of the Industrial Union both as a revolutionary weapon in the class struggle and as furnishing the economic framework, the industrial constituencies, of the future Socialist Industrial Republic. . . ."9

De Leon opposed an idea which has gained currency among many Marxists, the conception of the "inevitability of socialism". He definitely rejected it:

" 'The Feudal System', one often hears asserted from many a sincere Socialist source, 'overthrew the Theocratic System; the Capitalist System overthrew the Feudal System; the Socialist System must, therefore, inevitably overthrow the Capitalist System.' . . . And they consider that, by saying that, all is said that is to be said on the matter. . . . The Capitalist Class will stand by, cap in hand, and allow the Proletariat -- some call it 'the people' -- to step in -- and there you have your Socialist Republic.

"Socialist science is no automatic affair. It knows and teaches that nothing is the result of any one, but of many causes, operating together"10

Theory of the State. In De Leon's plan for the conquest of state power, both the political party (the S.L.P.) and the Industrial Union play complementary roles. Like other Marxian parties, the Socialist Labor party has regarded the state as an instrument of oppression, exploitation and coercion, whose main function is the maintenance of the status quo in existing class relations.¹ But unlike the Marxists-Leninists, for example, who look forward to the gradual disappearance (the "withering away") of the oppressive functions of the state and ultimately of the state itself,² the De Leonists plan to capture the state at the polls, destroy its political organization and replace it by the Socialist Industrial Union which is the central organization of all the industrial unions

⁹A. J. Taylor. See Petersen, Proletarian Democracy vs. Dictatorships and Despotism, pp. 9-10.

¹⁰De Leon, Two Pages from Roman History, p. 58.

¹S.L.P., The Socialist Movement, pp. 5-6.

²Lenin, State and Revolution, pp. 37, 79-80, 84-85.

of the country.³

" . . . It follows herefrom that the goal of the political movement is purely destructive. Suppose that, at some election, the class conscious political arm of labor were to sweep the field; suppose the sweeping were done in such a landslide fashion that the capitalist election officials are themselves so completely swept off their base that they wouldn't, if they could, and that they couldn't, if they would, count us out; suppose that, from President down to Congress and the rest of the political redoubts of the capitalist political robber burg, our candidates were installed; -- suppose that, what would there be for them to do? Simply to adjourn themselves, on the spot, sine die. Their work would be done by disbanding. The political movement of labor, that, in the event of triumph, would prolong its existence a second after triumph, would be a usurpation. It would be either a usurpation or the signal for a social catastrophe if the political triumph did not find the working class of the land industrially organized, that is, in full possession of the plants of production and distribution, capable, accordingly, to assume the integral conduct of the productive powers of the land. The catastrophe would be instantaneous. The plants of production and distribution having remained in capitalist hands, production would be instantly blocked. On the other hand, if the political triumph does find the working class industrially organized, then for the political movement to prolong its existence would be to attempt to usurp the powers which its very triumph announces have devolved upon the central administration of the industrial organization. The 'reason' for a political movement obviously unfits it to 'take and hold' the machinery of production. What the political movement 'moves into' is not the shops but the robber burg of capitalism -- for the purpose of dismantling it."⁴

Revolution the Goal. Consistent with its policy of "revolutionary Marxism", the Socialist Labor party has proclaimed time and again that it is a party of revolution, not of reform. It does not wish to create any illusion by fostering a belief in the "inevitability of gradualness".

" . . . When a change leaves the internal mechanism untouched, we have Reform; whenever the internal mechanism is changed, we have Revolution. . . .

"We Socialists are not Reformers; we are Revolutionists. We Socialists do not propose to change forms. We care nothing for forms. We want a change of the inside of the mechanism of society, let the form take care of itself. . . ." ⁵

" . . . The program of this revolution consists not in any one detail. It demands the unconditional surrender of the capitalist system and its system of wage slavery; the total extinction of class rule is its object. Nothing short

³De Leon, Socialist Reconstruction of Society, pp. 55-57. Petersen, Proletarian Democracy vs. Dictatorships and Despotism, p. 33.

⁴De Leon, Socialist Reconstruction of Society, pp. 55-56.

⁵De Leon, Reform or Revolution, p. 3.

of that -- whether as a first, a temporary, or any other sort of step can at this date receive recognition in the camp of the modern revolution."⁶

Peaceful Conquest of Power. The Socialist Labor party has insisted that the goal of the movement must not be confused with its technique. Although revolutionary in its goal, it abhors bloodshed, insurrection and violence in its methods; it prefers ballots to bullets. It has contended that its political aim, the capture of the state and its immediate destruction, can be accomplished by peaceful methods.

The basis for its contention is none other than Marx. An excerpt from his address at a congress of the First International at the Hague has been frequently quoted:

"We know that the institutions, the manners and the customs of the various countries must be considered, and we do not deny that there are countries like England and America, and, if I understood your arrangements better, I might even add Holland, where the worker may attain his object by peaceful means. But not in all countries is this the case."¹

De Leon has proclaimed his faith in the ballot as the most effective method of capturing the state:

" . . . In short and in fine, the political movement bows to the methods of civilized discussion; it gives a chance to the peaceful solution of the great question at issue. . . ."

"The Ballot is a weapon of civilization; the ballot is a weapon that no revolutionary movement of our times may ignore except at its own peril; the Socialist ballot is the emblem of right. . . ."²

" . . . The bona fide Movement of Labor may not 'adopt' the methods of the capitalist class in the class war. The Labor Movement must, on the contrary, place itself upon the highest plane civilization has reached. It must insist upon the enforcement of civilized methods, and it must do so in the way that civilized man does. . . ."³

⁶Ibid., p. 15.

¹Marx, quoted in Petersen, Proletarian Democracy vs. Dictatorships and Despotism, p. 61.

²De Leon, Socialist Reconstruction of Society, pp. 58-59.

³De Leon, As To Politics, p. 90.

" . . . The revolutionist, however, should never feel impelled to apologize for insisting on the possibility of a peaceful solution, provided he does not neglect the organizing of the needed force, the Industrial Union Dear to the heart of civilized man is the hope of settling social disputes peacefully, and, as De Leon said, it is one consummation dearly pursued by the Socialist. We of the working class want peace. We are tired and weary of the struggle of the ages. We want to put an end to capitalism with as little trouble as possible, though with all the power necessary. . . ."⁴

Conception of Industrial Unionism. Although the conception of Industrial Unionism is at the very heart and core of everything Daniel De Leon and the Socialist Labor party have stood for, it is exceedingly difficult to reduce it to a simple formula or statement.

All Marxian parties have more or less espoused industrial (as contrasted with craft) unionism. But the Socialist Labor party has contended that De Leon alone understood its full import and adequately propounded the correct theses concerning its necessity, development, organization and the role it is to play after the destruction of the capitalist state.

Industrial Unionism as developed by De Leon involves three distinct problems: form, tactics and goal.¹ It is not necessary to be concerned here with the problem of craft versus industrial unionism, since very little brief is made for the former by Marxists; the arguments in favor of industrial unionism have almost become stock. But one can still turn to the early writings of De Leon for a thorough exposition on that subject.²

In answer to the question, "How does Industrialism organize?" De Leon has given this summary answer:

⁴Petersen, Proletarian Democracy vs. Dictatorships and Despotism, p. 63.

¹De Leon, Industrial Unionism, p. 5.

²The better known pamphlets upon this subject by De Leon are: Industrial Unionism; Industrial Unionism, Selected Editorials; The Burning Question of Trade Unions.

"1st. By gathering into and keeping in 'Recruiting Locals' the individual workers of whose specific occupation there may not as yet be enough to organize a 'Trade and Shop Branch';

2nd. By gathering into 'Trade and Shop Branches' all the workers who use the identical tool.

3rd. By gathering into 'Local Industrial Unions' all the several 'Trade and Shop Branches' whose combined work furnishes a given output. There can be no 'Local Industrial Union' without at least two 'Trade and Shop Branches'.

"These are the first three stages. The further stages in the ascending line, -- Industrial Councils, National Industrial Unions and Industrial Departments -- are obvious. Their structure, hence the method of their organization, flows from the structure and reason for the structure of the 'Local Industrial Union.'"³

De Leon summed this up succinctly when he declared:

"Industrial Unionism is the Socialist Republic in the making; and the goal once reached, the Industrial Union is the Socialist Republic in operation.

"Accordingly, the Industrial Union is, at once, the battering ram with which to pound down the fortress of capitalism and the successor of the capitalist social structure itself."⁴

The Socialist Labor party has never looked upon a highly integrated organization of industrial unions in the same light as do most trade unionists; it has rejected the conception of the industrial union as an organization of workers intent upon securing greater pay, shorter working week and better working conditions. On the contrary, it has spurned such an orientation and has opposed any program for realizing such immediate demands. The S.L.P.'s conception of the purpose of trade union organization is of greater significance: when the political organization of the state has been destroyed by elected Congressmen (a majority representing the S.L.P.) who have immediately voted the dissolution of Congress, the Industrial Union is that organization which is to succeed the state and take over the control and operation of the economic and other affairs of the country. In other words, what De Leon has proposed is to replace the political by an industrial organization of society. It is this con-

³De Leon, Industrial Unionism, p. 10.

⁴Ibid., p. 4.

cept which has given rise to the claim of the S.L.P. that De Leon anticipated the Soviet idea which was adopted at the time of the Russian Revolution.

Thus did De Leon contend:

"Civilized society will know no such ridiculous thing as geographic constituencies. It will only know industrial constituencies. The parliament of civilization in America will consist, not of Congressmen from geographic districts, but of representatives of trades throughout the land, and their legislative work will not be the complicated one which a society of conflicting interests, such as capitalism, requires, but the easy one which can be summed up in the statistics of the wealth needed, the wealth producible, and the work required -- and that any average set of workingmen's representatives are fully able to ascertain, infinitely better than our modern rhetoricians in Congress. . . ."5

"Socialism, therefore, in its first plank, demands the abolition of the Political State. . . .

"The Socialist government will and must be an industrial government. The industrial vote will take the place of the political vote; the governmental representatives under the Socialist Industrial Republic will be industrial delegates, trained men, engineers and technicians who spring out of their respective industries, men well versed in the needs and possibilities of the industries they represent in the general council of all industries."6

" . . . Where the general council of the Industrial Union organization meets, there will be the capital of the nation."7

⁵De Leon, quoted in Petersen, Proletarian Democracy vs. Dictatorships and Despotism, p. 29.

⁶Socialist Labor Party, The N R A , p. 34.

⁷S.L.P., Socialist Labor Party vs. Socialist Party, p. 3.

CHAPTER V

THE SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY: STRATEGY, TACTICS AND PARTY ORGANIZATION

Strategy and Tactics

The American Approach. In the very early days of its history, the Socialist Labor party took to heart the lesson of Engels, who wrote, concerning it:

"This party is called upon to play a very important part in the movement. But in order to do so they will have to doff every remnant of their foreign garb. They will have to become out and out American. They cannot expect the Americans to come to them; they, a minority and the immigrants, must go to the Americans who are the vast majority and the natives. And to do that they must above all learn English."¹

The result was a campaign inaugurated by De Leon to uproot the German tradition, customs and language of the Alte Genossen (the old Comrades) and replace them by American institutions. Although the transition was a painful one, and some comrades were lost in the process, De Leon again triumphed. The supremacy of the Alte Genossen was at an end. One of the chief causes for his success was the establishment in English of the party press, The People. Thereafter the movement attempted to remain conscious of its new American basis.

Prior to 1935, the tactics of the Communist party in America gave rise to the allegation by the S.L.P. that what the former attempted was a mechanical transfer of methods suitable to an alien soil only (Soviet Russia). As a result the S.L.P. re-affirmed its faith in the American approach:

" . . . As De Leon concisely summed up this principle: 'The Socialist move-

¹Petersen, Revolutionary Milestones, p. 4.

ment of America will have its tactical moves determined by the sociological topography of the land. A movement that here is molded by the sociological topography of any other country is in the air!."2

The General Strike. The most significant and cogent tactic which the Industrial Union has declared is potentially at its disposal is the General Strike. De Leon's treatment of this topic seems somewhat sketchy,¹ but what follows appears to be the sum and substance of it: (1) The General Strike takes place after (not before) the victory of the S.L.P. at the polls, if the ruling class does not concede the political victory, which most likely will be the case. (2) Its purpose is to cement the election victory by stopping production completely until the recalcitrant capitalist class has relinquished its control of industry and has been ousted from the factories, leaving the field free to the integrated industrial unions through its National Executive Council to take over the management, operation and control of the industrial life of the country.

"There now only remains one point to consider, and I am through. It is the point with regard to the necessity of the industrial organization in order to supplement the right of the ballot with the might requisite to put the quietus upon the capitalist class itself. The point implies what is generally, but wrongly, meant by THE GENERAL STRIKE, a term, that, through misuse by its own advocates, who have hitherto placed the cart before the horse, is greatly misunderstood, and should be substituted by the more appropriate term of the general lockout of the capitalist class.

"Political power is reached through the ballot-box. But the ballot-box is not an open field; it is a veritable defile. That defile is held by the agents of the capitalist class. The election inspectors and returning boards are capitalist appointees; they are veritable garrisons with which the capitalist class holds the defile. To imagine that these capitalist garrisons of the election defiles will complacently allow the candidates of the revolution, whose program is the dismantling of the political burg of capitalism, peacefully to file through, is to indulge in a mooncalf's vision Let the political thermometer rise to the point of danger, then, all monkeying with the thermometer notwithstanding, your capitalist will quake in his stolen boots; he will not dare to fight; he will flee. At least I, for one, expect to see him flee. But, indeed, he will not unless, back of that ballot that has raised the political temperature to fever-heat is the might of the industrial establishments of the land, organized, integrally, and, consequently, capable of assuming

²Petersen, Burlesque Bolshevism, p. 59.

¹De Leon, Socialist Reconstruction of Society, pp. 62-67.

the conduct of the nation's production. The complete industrial organization of the working class will then have insured the peaceful issue of the struggle. But perhaps the capitalist may not flee. Perhaps, in a delirium of rage, he may resist. So much the worse -- for him. The might, implied in the industrial organization of the working class of the land, will be in a position to mop the earth with the rebellious usurper in short order and safeguard the right that the ballot proclaimed."²

"Maybe the S.L.P. will triumph at the hustings, that is, win out and be rightly counted. In this case the S. L.P. would forthwith dissolve; the political State would be ipso facto abolished; the industrially and integrally organized proletariat will without hindrance assume the administration of the productive powers of the land. Is this impossible? We admit it is highly improbable.

"More likely is the event of the S.L.P. triumph at the polls, but defeat by election inspectors, or resistance, as the Southern slaveholders did at the election of Lincoln. In that case also the S.L.P. would forthwith dissolve into its economic organization. That body, having had the opportunity to recruit and organize its forces, and the civilized method of peaceful trial of strength having been abandoned, the Might of the proletariat will then be there, free to resort to the last resort, and physically mop the earth with the barbarian Capitalist Class."³

From the foregoing it would seem that although the S.L.P. is opposed to force and violence it is nonetheless prepared to resort to their use if the capitalist class does not yield and honor the popular mandate won by the S.L.P. at the polls.

S.L.P. not Syndicalist. The Socialist Labor party has vigorously denied the charge made time and again that De Leon's theory of industrialism constitutes, as Raisky has stated it, " . . . a retreat from Marxism in the direction of syndicalism. . . ."⁴

" . . . Industrialism, or to put it correctly, Industrial Unionism is implicit in Marxism, so implicit, indeed, that to have omitted it as the central feature of the Socialist movement in America would have constituted 'a retreat from Marxism', with social reformism and Gompersism as the inevitable alternative. . . . Moreover, in stigmatizing De Leon's Industrial Union theory as a retreat from Marxism, Raisky must accept the logic of his contention by including Lenin as one who also 'retreated' from Marxism, for it was Lenin who recognized De Leon's Industrial union and Industrial Government theory as the only contribution to Marxian thought, adding: 'Industrial Unionism is the basic thing, that is what we are building.' "⁵

² Ibid., pp. 62-64.

³ De Leon, As to Politics, pp. 60-61.

⁴ Raisky, Daniel De Leon, p. 9. Also see De Leon, Industrial Unionism -- Selected Editorials, pp. 43-51.

⁵ Petersen, in footnote to Raisky, Daniel De Leon, pp. 9-10

De Leon has declared that syndicalism stressed "function", not "structure" of economic organization, as contrasted with the S.L.P., which took the opposite stand:

" . . . Stripped of some casual expressions, 'Syndicalism' is not 'Industrial Unionism'. Syndicalism lays hardly any stress -- it can not choose but fail to lay stress: the capitalist development in the land of its birth does not furnish it with the foundation for laying such stress -- upon the STRUCTURE, its main stress is laid upon the FUNCTION of the economic organization, -- that function being, according to 'Syndicalism', physical force. Industrial Unionism, on the contrary, being the product of American highly developed capitalism, lays main stress upon the STRUCTURE of the economic organization; the FUNCTION of the same -- the overthrow of the Political State and the seizing of the reins of Government as the Socialist or Industrial State -- flowing, as a matter of course, from its structure."⁶

The mention of syndicalism brings to mind the bitter conflict which raged in the S.L.P. for a short period (about 1905-1908). At this time, the syndicalists succeeded in gaining control of the Industrial Workers of the World; they struck from the preamble of its constitution all reference to politics. In 1908, De Leon was ousted from the I.W.W. because of his fight to retain the political clause in its constitution. Some members of the S.L.P. likewise urged their own organization to repudiate De Leon's stand and place all reliance upon "revolutionary, class-conscious Industrial Unionism".⁷ De Leon resisted this with all the strength he could muster. His pamphlet, As to Politics, was his answer to the out-and-out syndicalists in the party. He maintained that the most fundamental question of all remained unanswered by his syndicalist opponents: "How do you expect to recruit and organize your industrial army if you begin by rejecting the peaceful method of solving the Social Question, to wit, the political method?"⁸

The result was a complete rout of the syndicalist group in the S.L.P.

⁶De Leon, Industrial Unionism -- Selected Editorials, p. 47.

⁷De Leon, As to Politics, p. vi.

⁸Ibid., pp. 37-38.

De Leon triumphed over his enemies.⁹

This, of course, does not completely dispose of the contention of Raisky and others that the Socialist Labor party's Industrial Unionism IS syndicalism. But the point to be clearly understood is that in its own eyes the Socialist Labor party has never regarded itself as a syndicalist group.

Confiscation or Compensation? The plan of the S.L.P. for the conquest of power at the polls, followed by the general strike if necessary, has raised this question: "Will you Socialists confiscate or purchase all capital now used in production and exchange?"¹

According to De Leon, there will be no technical confiscation, although as a matter of everyday fact, the owners of capital will be deprived of their last farthing and will be given nothing in return. De Leon has reasoned thus: If any seizure of property were attempted under the present social order, such a seizure if effective would constitute confiscation unless some form of adequate compensation were made in return. "It all turns upon what the social principle is upon which the nation rests, hence upon the constitution and laws that are in force."² But if the S.L.P. succeeded in gaining control of the government at the polls and established a new social order, the subsequent taking over of land, factories, railroads, etc., would not be confiscation even though nothing were given in return.

". . . Confiscation means the appropriation of property contrary to the laws of an existing social system. Revolutions, however, bring their own laws with them. Consequently, under the laws of a Social Revolution, that may be done legitimately, without the brand of 'confiscation' which, under the laws of the social system that the Revolution has supplanted, would be called confiscation. . . . Like all Revolutionary Governments, the Government of the United States was born in revolution. It did not 'confiscate' under the laws of its own existence, whatever the name given to the act by the social system and government which it overthrew. The question is, Do the requirements of the

⁹Petersen, Revolutionary Milestones, pp. 20-21.

¹De Leon, Fifteen Questions, p. 84.

²Ibid., p. 89.

working class demand a different state of society? If the answer is, Yes, then that appropriation is not confiscation at all. . . ."3

De Leon has further argued that it would be futile to attempt to pay off the capitalists, for four reasons:

"1st. To buy the capitalist off with money, or its token, would be to cheat him, . . .

"2nd. To 'pay' the capitalist by pensioning him out of the National Store would be to bond the Nation, and bond it indefinitely. Socialism is here to free, not to bond the workers.

"3rd. No Social Revolution ever bought off the tyrant class against whom it rose. . . .

"4th. Socialism being the highest expression of morality and justice, the taking of the capital, and thereby the emancipating of property from the shackles of private ownership, can be accomplished without inflicting upon the previous class the social penalty that all previous class revolutions have inflicted upon the class that they overthrew. . . . Seeing that Socialism abolishes, not simply the class rule of the present ruling class, but class rule itself, the conquered capitalist will not be yoked; he will be raised, along with the rest of the population to peership with all others in a Commonwealth where his existence will be safeguarded, the same as the existence of all others, under the only condition that he sponge not, but do his share in the co-operative work. . . ."4

This, then, has been the answer of the S.L.P. to those who want to know whether it favors compensation or outright confiscation.

Dual Unionism. Since trade union activity plays a vital role in the fundamental principles of the S.L.P., early in its history (about 1891-1894) "strenuous efforts were made to inoculate the trade unions of the land with Socialist revolutionary principles by means of a method designated in those days as 'boring from within'."1 The Knights of Labor and the American Federation of Labor were invaded,² but the results were negligible.

The upshot of this disillusionment over its failure to make any headway was the formation in 1895 of the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance, an opposi-

³Ibid., p. 88.

⁴Ibid., pp. 96-98.

¹Symposium, Daniel De Leon, I, pp. 6-7.

²Ibid., pp. 7-8.

tion (dual) union with a revolutionary program, which attempted to organize unskilled as well as skilled workers, "to supply the proletariat with a union thoroughly imbued with a class spirit"³ and to carry out generally on the economic field the Socialist Labor policies of industrial unionism.⁴ Later it attempted to carry on this work through the Workers' International Industrial Union.⁵ The S.L.P. has since that time espoused dual unionism. It has refused to make any efforts to work with reform, or penetrate the American Federation of Labor, which De Leon has characterized as "neither American, nor a federation, nor of Labor".⁶ It has clung to the idea of building its own revolutionary industrial unions along socialist lines.

Of its early policy of "boring from within" both in the S.P. and the A.F.L. De Leon later stated:

"An organization is a structure. A steamer constructed for an excursion boat cannot be transformed into a battleship. No amount of pruning, nursing and grafting will turn a sour apple tree into a tree that will bear oranges. . . ."⁷

"The trade union leaders will let you bore from within only enough to throw you out through that hole bored by you."⁸

The S.L.P. has thus answered the reproach that the party has espoused dual unionism:

"For our advocacy of Industrial Unionism we have been termed dual unionists by the would-be ultra revolutionists, and dual unionism was supposed to be a great crime and a tactical error since it could only aim at the destruction of that capitalist bulwark, the A.F. of L., which, however, we have never considered as a working class organization. We have demonstrated in answer to this that if the Communists or anyone else would ever successfully 'bore from within' they would soon bore themselves out, which would eventually result in 'dual unionism', that is, a new form of unionism, if the workers were not going to accept a total rout from the Civic Federation's capitalist ally, the A.F. of L."⁹

³Petersen, Proletarian Democracy vs. Dictatorships and Despotism, p. 22.

⁴Symposium, Daniel De Leon, I, pp. 8-12; II, pp. 30-32.

⁵Ibid., II, p. 159.

⁶Symposium, Daniel De Leon, II, p. 96.

⁷De Leon, As to Politics, p. 111.

⁸De Leon, quoted in Raisky, Daniel De Leon, p. 21.

⁹Socialist Labor Party, The Socialist Labor Party and the Third International, pp. 43-44.

Trade union developments of recent years have in no manner changed the attitude of the S.L.P. towards the American Federation of Labor and its leadership. The early hostility expressed by De Leon¹⁰ has prevailed. The endorsement and support of the National Industrial Recovery Act of 1933 by the A.F.L. has again resulted in a sell-out of labor's cause, it has contended:

"For half a century almost, the A.F. of L. and kindred 'union leaders' have been notorious betrayers of 'organized labor'. Whatever power they have in the labor movement they owe to their role, not as true leaders of the workers in their class struggle against the capitalists, but to their policy of obscuring class divisions and the irrepressible class struggle, and their efforts to act as mediators between the working class and the capitalist class. It is this impossible role of mediator between irreconcilable interests which has earned for the trade union leader the designation labor faker.

"Never was such designation more deserved. . . ." ¹¹

The C.I.O. -- Pseudo-Industrial Unionism. The organization of the Committee for Industrial Organization, headed by John L. Lewis, has not unnaturally given rise to the question: to what extent, if at all, are the concepts of industrial unionism held by Lewis identical with those propounded by De Leon and advocated by the Socialist Labor party? On this point, the reply of the Socialist Labor party has left little doubt. As the latter has viewed it, they have nothing in common, save, fortuitously, the name. Indeed, one of the S.L.P. leaflets has gone much further; from its title, "The C.I.O. -- The Road to Fascism," one may gather that the S.L.P. has regarded this movement as a great danger to the working class. The same leaflet referred to the C.I.O. as " . . . a machine for lying about Industrial Unionism."

The present movement of the C.I.O. for industrial unionism has been thoroughly condemned as a travesty upon genuine industrial unionism. The sincere move for industrial unionism in 1905 ended in tragedy; to-day it has recurred as a farce, the S.L.P. has stated.

¹⁰ De Leon, Two Pages from Roman History, pp. 30-54.

¹¹ A. J. T., in S.L.P., The NRA, pp. 29-30.

" . . . We witness the recurrence, in its farcical aspect, in the Lewis fake industrial union movement, the so-called C.I.O., many of whose supporters and leaders were instrumental in corrupting and eventually wrecking the original Industrial Union movement, the Industrial Workers of the World, organized in Chicago thirty-two years ago. The C.I.O., offered as industrial unionism, and hailed as such by the fakers and muddleheaded reformers and 'liberals', is so obviously a caricature of genuine Industrial Unionism, that only the present period of amazing chaos, confusion and social disintegration can account for its acceptance as the genuine article by so many otherwise honest and intelligent people.

"As all great cartoonists know, caricature (in itself a great art) must present its subject with an element of truth, or essential likeness of the original, however purposely distorted. And deliberate intent to distort for some ulterior objective, good or bad, is the essence of all caricature. The serious student of historic facts, and of social phenomena generally, will without difficulty perceive that the so-called industrial union movement as launched by Lewis is a monstrous distortion, a vicious misrepresentation, of genuine Industrial Unionism as fathered by the great American Marxist, Daniel De Leon."¹

The Socialist Labor party has added that its warning of many years ago is coming to pass: industrial unionism is capable of being perverted to purposes best suited to finance capitalism, and even to fascism itself.

"In 1910 the Socialist Labor Party anticipated the attempt on the part of the reaction to organize the workers into vertical unions. We declared then: 'Industrial Unionism does not of itself mean the economic body necessary for the revolutionary act. The form of Industrialism may subserve the most reactionary of schemes. . . . [It could] be turned into the most effective capitalist weapon to bridle the working class.' It is precisely the form of Industrial Unionism that has been imitated in fascist Italy and is now being imitated in the United States. . . ."²

"We are firmly of the opinion that the C.I.O. is consciously or unconsciously playing into the hands of the reactionary plutocracy of America. The workers of this country must rise to the occasion. The demand of the hour is for genuine Socialist Industrial Unionism. Only we can present these principles to the workers of the nation. . . ."³

The best proof that their contention is correct, the S.L.P. has alleged, is that the C.I.O.'s plan for industrial unionism is endorsed by some of the great capitalists of the United States, including Myron C. Taylor, of Big Steel, for example, an ardent admirer of Mussolini.⁴ In an interview which appeared in

¹Arnold Petersen, Introduction to Eric Hass, John L. Lewis Exposed!, pp. 3-4.

²Socialist Labor Party, The C.I.O. -- The Road to Fascism, p. 1.

³Ibid., p. 3.

⁴Eric Hass, John L. Lewis Exposed!, pp. 21-23.

a New York newspaper, Morgan representatives were reported as having 'praise and admiration' for Lewis.⁵ If the C.I.O. were a militant workers' industrial union, such a thing could not be possible, the S.L.P. has contended.

Objectively considered, the purpose which the C.I.O. has best served has been that of fooling the workers into believing they have been members of a real industrial union with genuine principles of Industrial Unionism, the S.L.P. has alleged.

"The C.I.O., a self-appointed committee, with unlimited funds and a build-up in the capitalist press, has set up a decoy to draw the workers away from that which they instinctively seek -- a union which unites. Lack of clarity on the part of the workers is responsible for their being caught by a name, 'industrial unionism'."⁶

The Socialist Labor party has pointed to numerous differences alleged to separate genuine industrial unionism from the "fake" industrial unionism represented by Lewis and the C.I.O.: (1) Industrial Unionism has recognized the need for political action to supplement economic organization -- a workers' political party. The C.I.O. is limited to economic action alone as its objective. (2) Industrial Unionism has attempted to organize all workers, skilled and unskilled, of both sexes, employed and unemployed. The C.I.O. is concerned only with "those who have jobs and can pay dues". (3) Industrial Unionism has not looked for recognition from the employer; the C.I.O. makes a bid for recognition and cooperation with the capitalist class. (4) Industrial Unionism has been controlled by its rank-and-file membership. The C.I.O. acts through self-appointed "labor fakers" who have empowered themselves to act independently of the organization they profess to represent. (5) Industrial Unionism has had for its goal the establishment of a classless society based upon socialist principles. The C.I.O. is limited in its purposes and vision to obtaining collective bargaining,

⁵Socialist Labor Party, The C.I.O. -- The Road to Fascism, p. 3.

⁶Hass, op. cit., p. 58.

whose only objectives can be higher wages, fewer hours and better working conditions, without any consideration of the very root of the evil: the capitalist system.⁷

The Socialist Labor party has characterized John L. Lewis as the very prototype of labor faker and misleader of the working class which it has been fighting since its inception. He is of the "Samuel capital-and-labor-are brothers Gompers" school of labor leaders.⁸ Dating back to about 1918 as a figure in labor circles, his career has been one of opportunism and sell-outs. He has been able to retain power by the strong-arm methods of destroying opponents, stuffing ballot boxes, expulsions, and revocation of charters.⁹ His labor policies have shown an amazing ignorance, particularly his conception of divorcing trade unionism from politics.¹⁰ In his time, he has been a notorious red-baiter, pointing out to employers with whom he has attempted to sign contracts that collective bargaining is their best guarantee of keeping communism out of the United States.¹¹

" 'Grind men under the employers' heel,' he said, 'and you invite Communism. Give men a square deal and you take out an insurance policy against it. That's one reason our American workers have not been susceptible so far. Our living conditions are fairly good. Keep them good and we'll have no radicalism in this country.' "¹²

In short, as far as the S.L.P. is concerned, the C.I.O. movement is just " . . . a new edition of the old fakeration jurisdiction squabble. . . . "¹³ The party of De Leon has thus scorned both A.F.L. and C.I.O. and has concluded with " . . . a plague on both your houses. . . . "¹⁴

⁷Hass, op. cit., pp. 58-62.

⁸Ibid., p. 29.

⁹Ibid., pp. 48-49.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 50-51.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 18-19.

¹²Ibid., p. 19.

¹³Weekly People, Nov. 13, 1937, p. 4.

¹⁴Ibid., Oct. 23, 1937, p. 1.

No Class Collaboration. The Socialist Labor party has been unalterably opposed to any policy of co-operation or alliances with capitalist or other non-revolutionary groups which leads to a truce between the classes, whether called a "people's front" or any other such name. It has stood by the "class struggle" without any compromise of any kind.

" . . . the Proletarian Revolution must not only not seek, but must avoid, as it would a pestilence, all alliance with any other class in its struggles, or even its skirmishes, with the Capitalist Class, the landlord plutocracy of to-day"1

"The concern of the Marxist, then, in a fully developed capitalist country is entirely with the program of the revolution. Any compromises entered into with the reactionary elements still surviving (the petty shopkeepers, the petty farmers) constitute a direct betrayal of the revolution, and when done in the name of Marx become a deliberate denial and mockery of Marxism. . . ."2

De Leon has quoted a fable to explain the reason for such an unequivocal stand:

"A horse was being harassed by a lion. The horse found that his opportunities to graze were impaired by that roaring beast that lay low in the bushes and threatened to jump upon him, and frequently did jump upon him, and not infrequently scratched him to the point of bleeding; so that the horse, finding the area of his pasture narrowing, and his life threatened either way, entered into a compact with a man. According to agreement, the man mounted the horse, and by their joint efforts the lion was laid low. But never again could the horse rid himself of the man on his back."3

No Program of Immediate Demands. Unlike the Socialist and Communist parties which have supported programs of immediate demands regarded by them as consistent with their ultimate goal, the Socialist Labor party has held out, no such program. It has been De Leon's contention that immediate demands are in the nature of sops and palliatives; instead of being incidental gains on the high road towards socialism they often become the ends in themselves; the larger goal is forgotten. In addition, they have a demoralizing effect upon labor; small

¹De Leon, Two Pages from Roman History, p. 79.

²Petersen, Karl Marx and Marxism, p. 30.

³De Leon, Two Pages from Roman History, p. 78.

gains tend to satisfy workers who do not think it necessary to wage the larger fight any longer. Thus, the Socialist Labor party will not advocate the passage of minimum wage laws, child labor laws, social security laws or any other measures affecting the social and economic welfare of the working class. Its entire attitude can be summed up tersely: ". . . the S.L.P. has been a clean-cut Revolutionary Party, with but one demand, the unconditional surrender of capitalism and the establishment of the Workers' Industrial Republic."⁴

" . . . Every reform granted by capitalism is a concealed measure of reaction. He who says reform says preservation, and he who says that reforms under capitalism are possible and worth while thereby declares that a continuation of capitalism is possible and worth while. But capitalism has grown into an all-destroying and all-devouring monster that must be destroyed if humanity is to live."⁵

". . . . The historic mission of the working class is to overthrow capitalism and all that belongs to it. The social system that is to be ended cannot and should not be mended. Hence the working class has no interest in all the 'issues' thrown up by a decadent capitalism. High or low tariffs, high or low taxes, graft or efficiency in federal, state, and local governments -- these and similar problems of the 'practical politicians' do not concern the working class in the least. While capitalism lasts, the workers have but one immediate interest: higher wages and shorter hours. If these things are obtainable at all under present-day capitalism (which they are not except as conciliatory concessions made by an alarmed ruling class), they can be secured only through powerful Industrial Unions. Hence, the Socialist Labor Party, which represents the true interests of the working class, is not in the least interested in the tariff, in taxes, in prohibition, the water power question. It is interested in but one thing: the integral industrial organization of the working class. This is what we urge the workers to build. Our battle cry is: Away with reform. Capitalism must be destroyed. ALL POWER TO THE SOCIALIST INDUSTRIAL UNION."⁶

"Not sops, but the unconditional surrender of capitalism, is the battle-cry of the Proletarian Revolution."⁷

United Front. On principle, the S.L.P. has spurned all offers of united front or united action with the Socialist party, the Communist party or any other Marxian or non-Marxian organization.¹ It has made no concessions, accepted no compromises, and has refused to work along lines not completely in accord with

⁴Johnson, The Socialist Party, p. 8.

⁵S.L.P., The Socialist Labor Party Program (1934), p. 22.

⁶Petersen, W. Z. Foster, Renegade or Spy?, pp. 36-37.

⁷De Leon, Two Pages from Roman History, p. 83.

¹The Weekly People, March 3, 1934, p. 4.

its own basic principles. It has literally stood in the position of the Socialist Labor party against the Field.

Labor Party. The S. L. P. has consistently denounced the efforts of trade union officials, "Marxists" and others to form a labor or farmer-labor party. Such a party has been regarded as a potential instrument of fascism.¹ For example, its response to the attempts of the Wisconsin La Follettes to form a National Progressive party is a key to its attitude on the entire question. Delegates to the eighteenth biennial Wisconsin Socialist-Labor party convention put themselves down on record in these terms:

"Whereas, the newly organized, so-called 'National Progressives of America' in the great liberal State of the La Follette brothers, with its badge imitating the European dictatorships, bids for greater executive powers in the guise of modernizing the bankrupt form of capitalist democracy,

"We resolve to call upon workers of America to repudiate this insidious, incipient attempt to enlist the support of the working class in the establishment of fascism, sugar-coated as 'progressivism'." ²

Party Organization

Lack of space prevents a detailed analysis of the organization of the S.L.P. Two important aspects are presented however, to show its essential monolithic outlook: party discipline and the party press.

Party Discipline. De Leon's concept of party discipline has been likened to that of Lenin.¹ He believed in extreme party centralization; he argued that all members of the party should be held to the strictest accountability after decisions had been made; that any breach should be severely dealt with. So insistent was he upon these points that while a member of the S.L.P., Hillquit ". . . constantly complained about 'the fanatical severity (of De Leon) in the enforcement of discipline'." ²

¹ Weekly People, Jan. 2, 1937, p. 5; Oct. 29, 1938, p. 5.

² New York Times, May 9, 1938, p. 11.

¹ Raisky, Daniel De Leon, p. 14.

² Idem.

Members of the S.L.P. have not regarded their conception of discipline as fanatical but rather as basically sound. They have concurred with De Leon in his analysis of the situation.

"Again, the modern revolutionist knows that in order to accomplish results or promote principle, there must be unity of action. He knows that, if we do not go in a body and hang together, we are bound to hang separate. Hence, you will ever see the revolutionist submit to the will of the majority; you will always see him the readiest to obey; . . . Hence, also, you will never find the revolutionist putting himself above the organization. . . ."3

" . . . Tamper with discipline, allow this member to do as he likes, that member to slap the party constitution in the face, yonder member to fuse with reformers, this other to forget the nature of the class struggle and to act up to his forgetfulness -- allow that, keep such 'reformers' in your ranks and you have stabbed your movement at its vitals. We know that in struggles of this kind, personal feelings, unfortunately, play a part; you cannot prevent that; let the otherside, the reformer, fill the role of malice that its weak intellect drives it to; do you fill the role of the square-jointed revolutionist -- and if there must be amputation, do it nobly, but firmly. Remember the adage that the tender-handed surgeon makes stinging wounds, and lengthens the period of suffering and pain. The surgeon that has a firm hand to push the knife as deep as it ought to go; and pulls it out, and lets the pus flow out, that surgeon makes clean wounds, shortens pain, brings cure quickly about.

"No organization will inspire the outside masses with respect that will not insist upon and enforce discipline within its own ranks. If you allow your own members to play monkeyshines with the party, the lookers-on, who belong in this camp, will justly believe that you will at some critical moment allow capitalism to play monkeyshines with you; they will not respect you, and their accession to your ranks will be delayed."4

"For a decade and a half the Socialist Labor Party saw tragedy brewing for the movement in the activities of the Socialist Party of America. It was anarchy personified. Opportunistic in principles and tactics, it naturally did not steer by the compass of Marxian Socialist science. Its state and local organizations were permitted to advocate anything they pleased in the name of Socialism -- shoddy reforms, physical force anarchy, pure and simple politicianism, Christian 'socialism', atheist 'socialism' and what not. The result of this could be nothing but mental confusion and hodge-podge. . . ."5

Party-owned Press.¹ Since 1899, there has been only an official press which speaks for the S.L.P.: The People, at one time a daily, but now The Weekly People. No other unofficial publication is permitted by party members. The reason for the dogmatic stand is summed up in its contention that "if the

³De Leon, Reform or Revolution, p. 17.

⁴Ibid., pp. 24-25.

⁵Socialist Labor Party, Who are the Falsifiers? p. 8.

¹Symposium, Daniel De Leon, I, pp. 18-23. De Leon, The Party Press, passim.

Party does not own the press, the press will own the Party."² The absence of an official party press places the party at the mercy of capitalist publishers or else leads to the mushroom growth of many papers and magazines by party members, each purporting to represent the true party viewpoint. The result is complete confusion and contradiction.

²Petersen, Revolutionary Milestones, p. 10.

CHAPTER VI

THE SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY: CRITICISM OF OTHER MARXIAN MOVEMENTS

The Socialist Party

In criticizing the Socialist party, the S.L.P. has not been unaware of the happenings in that organization since 1936, but its attitude has remained unchanged by these recent developments. It should also be noted that many of the criticisms found herein may appear somewhat dated, but they are presented because they are still part of current S.L.P. literature, and they give some indication of the basic differences separating these organizations.

Generally speaking the S.L.P.'s attitude towards the S.P. can be summarized very briefly. Its criticism has been strong, striking, severe; it has not hesitated to speak its mind. In its own eyes, the Socialist party is an enemy of the working class.

" . . . the so-called Socialist party is, in fact and in truth, a machine for lying about Marx and Marxism, i.e., Socialism."¹

"Of principles, the S.P. has no more than a bourgeois radical flying the false flag of Socialism. In its heyday, in a frantic scramble for votes and to capture office, it attempted to be all things to all men, the would-be leaders themselves -- outside of a few sharpers -- not knowing where they were going. It was a veritable blind leadership of the blind.

"The tactics of the S.P. are as they always have been -- hazy, crazy and muddled.

"The S.L.P. is sound as to principles, its tactics are clear, well-defined, unmistakable and effective.

"The S.P. and the Socialist Labor Party have nothing in common. . . ."²

More specifically, the S.L.P.'s criticism of the S.P. will be discussed under two sub-sections: the latter's theoretical analysis of Marxism; its strategy and tactics.

¹Petersen, Karl Marx and Marxism, p. 63.

²S.L.P., The Socialist Labor Party vs. The Socialist Party, p. 4. (Leaflet)

Theoretical analysis: Socialist Party's Conception of the State. The

S.L.P. has argued that the Marxian theory of the state looks forward to the destruction of the state after the conquest of political power, and not its continuation. For this reason, the S.L.P. has planned to supersede it by a Socialist Industrial Union. The Socialist party, on the other hand, it has been charged, has planned to retain the state rather than replace it. This does not accord with Marx.

"The Socialist Party adheres to the bourgeois theory that the aim of Socialism is to capture the political State and to run the industries by the State. We have shown how utterly impossible it is for the State to do this, and this being the conception of the revolution held by the Socialist Party, it, logically enough, does not see the necessity of organizing the workers into industrial class unions."¹

". . . The first revolutionary tenet of Marxism is integral industrial organization of the working class and the abolition of the Political State; the ultimate goal of the Socialist party has ever been 'state socialism', i.e., the control of industry through the Political State -- municipal, state or federal -- so far as the workers are concerned, a physical impossibility and a sociological absurdity."²

Taxes. The question of whether or not workers pay taxes was one of the early controversies waged between the Socialist Labor party and the Socialist party. The latter took the position that workers did pay taxes, hence it could legitimately make "lower taxes" one of its immediate demands.¹ The Socialist Labor party, on the other hand, held that workers did not pay taxes, that to so hold would be contrary to Marxian economics; that the practical effect would be "to champion the interests of the little cockroach business man".²

"De Leon maintained in The People, as the Socialist Labor Party does today, . . . , that workmen do not pay taxes; that all wealth is produced by labor, including the wealth out of which taxes are paid, but that taxes are paid out of that part of the workers' product of which under the wage system they have been filched anyway. . . ."³

¹ S.L.P., The Socialist Movement, p. 7.

² S.L.P., The Socialist Labor Party vs. The Socialist Party, p. 2.

¹ S.L.P., The Socialist Party, p. 6.

² Idem.

³ Symposium, Daniel De Leon, II, p. 63.

" . . . If the working class could be convinced that it was a tax-paying class, it could be shown to have interests in common with the capitalist class. 'Taxes!' exclaimed Frederick Engels. 'A matter, to the bourgeoisie of deep, to the workmen, however, of very slight concern. That which the workmen pay in taxes goes, in the long run, into the value of labor power, and, accordingly, must be borne by the capitalists.' "⁴

"The capitalist class pays the taxes but it would like to convince the working class that taxes are an issue of concern to them."⁵

Strategy and Tactics: Espousal of Reformism. The S.L.P.'s greatest criticism of the Socialist party has been that in the latter's desire to achieve immediate objectives, it has lost sight of the goal of socialism; that what once was regarded as means and intermediary steps have become the ends in themselves; that the Socialist party, in espousing reformism and compromise, has degenerated into a party fighting for municipal ownership of public utilities.

"There is no way of compromising with error. A revolutionary body cannot by any possibility be at the same time conservative. A party of Socialism cannot have one foot in the capitalist camp, let alone both feet as the S.P. did. . . ." ¹

"The S.P. has made no secret of its retreat even from a lip service to revolution. It wiped the 'class struggle' from its required doctrines. . . ." ²

" . . . The question of reform or revolution was important in the sense that the taxation question was important, for so long as the workers were doped with the opium of reform, no class view, and still less revolutionary action could be thought of. It has been well said that reform is compromise with the past. At any rate, the reform road leads back and never forward. . . ." ³

"Its attitude toward reforms in general does not differ essentially from that of the out and out capitalist reformers. In its anxiety to capture political office it seizes upon everything that agitates the mind of the people, regardless of whether it concerns the workers as a class or not. The S.L.P. does not refuse ameliorations offered by the capitalist class, but contends that the more revolutionary the workers become, and the stronger they make their economic and political organizations, the more ready, aye anxious, will the capitalist class be to throw sops to them in order to keep them contented.

"The program, therefore, of the Socialist Party is in keeping with its basic principles. Its anti-Socialist and bourgeois theories have led to its

⁴Petersen, Proletarian Democracy vs. Dictatorships and Despotism, p. 21.

⁵Weekly People, Nov. 14, 1936, p. 2.

¹S.L.P., The Socialist Party, p. 13.

²S.L.P., The Socialist Labor Party vs. The Socialist Party, p. 1.

³Petersen, op. cit., pp. 21-22.

entering into collusions and log-rolling with capitalist parties in different places of the country."⁴

Trade Union Policy. The Socialist Labor party has condemned the trade union policies of the Socialist party in several respects: (1) Its limited conception of the functions of the industrial union under capitalism and socialism. (2) Its former allegiance to the A.F.L. which never truly represented American labor. (3) Its present support of the C.I.O. which does not represent genuine industrial unionism.

The Socialist Labor party has also accused the S.P. of failing to co-ordinate the activities of the trade unions and the political party, and of placing a too-exclusive reliance upon the political technique for the transition to and reconstruction of the new society, without recognizing the necessity for co-operation with the industrial unions.

"As to tactics the difference between the two parties is equally great. The S.P. looks upon the union as a mere fighter for shorter hours or better wages now. It grants it no revolutionary function. Hence it caters to pure and simple unions, anarcho-syndicalist or even the anarcho-communist would-be unions -- as the wind of ballyhoo blows. Its revolutionary (Save the mark!) organization is the political party alone. Its functions are to capture the Political State and run it 'socialistically' by 'honest' S.P. politicians (Again save the mark!). We have seen that this is not Socialism and as 'tactics' it is equally 'wet'. We say to the S.P.: 'Suppose you did capture every office on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November, and the capitalists would shut down industry and starve the workers into submission during the long, cold winter, and get their army ready to keep you out of the office by the fourth of March, what would you do?'

" 'Fight!' shouted Mr. Hillquit.

" 'What with,' we ask. 'A starving working class? No weapons. No organization with any power.' "¹

" . . . The true function of the political Movement of Labor was discarded; political action became an end in itself, a means to attain power, place and pelf -- for a coterie of cheap adventurers. Instead of the principle of the organic unity of the Labor Movement in regard to both its manifestations, economic and political, the spurious slogans of 'Autonomy' and 'Neutrality' were set up to emphasize the absence of such organic unity. The pure and simple politicalist 'Socialist' party became on the political field the more sophis-

⁴S.L.P., The Socialist Movement, p. 10.

¹S.L.P., The Socialist Labor Party vs. The Socialist Party, p. 3.

ticated counterpart of the pure and simple craftist on the economic field, and the two, being essentially of the same breed, sought to work out between themselves a modus vivendi whereby they could operate, within their respective spheres, with as little hindrance as possible."²

A typical evaluation of the A.F.L. and the S.P. is the following written before the rise of the C.I.O.:

"The Socialist Party maintains that the American Federation of Labor is the true economic organization of the American working class. It claims now that whatever shortcomings the American Federation of Labor suffers from, they are not caused by its being structurally false, but because it is dominated by non-Socialist labor leaders, and that the thing to do is to keep on 'friendly' terms with the A.F. of L., not expose its false principles and the wrong acts flowing from adhering to such principles, but keep quiet about this and 'bore from within only'. Furthermore, they look upon the economic organization of Labor as a purely transitory thing, a thing which may aid the workers in their present struggle, but which, beyond this, has no value for the revolutionary movement.

"The Socialist Labor Party on the contrary, holds that the A.F. of L., as explained above, is not an organization of workers of America, notwithstanding the fact that it is composed of members of the working class. We hold that the A.F. of L. corruption is not caused by its labor leaders, any more than the evils of capitalist society in general are caused by the officials in power today. We hold -- and this is the Socialist view as contrasted with the bourgeois (capitalist) view -- that just as the capitalist officials are the products of the society, structurally wrong and based on false economics, so are the A.F. of L. leaders the product of an organization, structurally false and based on false economics. Remove one set of leaders, and another crop will immediately shoot up from the same soil. We hold that the A.F. of L. is an obstacle to Socialism, and that to support such an organization is to commit an act of treason against the working class as well as against International Socialism."³

Immigration. Although the Socialist party has not raised the immigration issue of late years, the S.L.P. has contended that the former's attitude has been traditionally one of hostility.¹ The Socialist Labor party has held: "Artificial barriers erected against the free and untrammelled migration of workers from one country to another sunder the bonds that should unite workers of all lands."² It has espoused "free and untrammelled immigration."³

²S.L.P., Manifesto of the Socialist Labor Party, pp. 11-12.

³S.L.P., The Socialist Movement, pp. 4-5.

¹Petersen, Revolutionary Milestones, pp. 16-18.

²Ibid., p. 17.

³Ibid., p. 18.

"As to immigration, the Socialist Labor Party holds that the working class the world over is indivisibly one; that as victims of the capitalist class their interests are common, regardless of race, creed or color. The Socialist Party maintains (uttering a fractional truth) that the influx of immigrants causes a keener struggle and lower wage for the workers already here. The fact remains, that while immigration does add to the number of workers, and to that extent increases the competition among the workers, it is as a drop in the ocean compared to the real cause -- the introduction of labor-saving machinery and concentration of capitalism. Even if every foreigner from now on were excluded, the misery of the workers would increase. Since this is so, and realizing that injecting the question of race superiority or inferiority foments race-hatred, and to that extent prevents the organizing of the workers, the S.L.P. condemns the stand of the S.P. as reactionary and un-Socialistic."⁴

Party Organization and Discipline. The S.L.P. has contended that, unlike its own organization which is a disciplined party, the S.P.'s organization is not well-knit nor conducive to disciplined action. The latter organization is a "loose federation of autonomous organizations" owing a minimum allegiance to the party.

"Theory of state autonomy which guarantees each state sovereign powers over its membership, leaving it to each state to conduct its agitation as it sees fit, with practically no control from headquarters. Thus, for instance, a member expelled from the state of Washington may apply and be admitted to membership in the state of Wisconsin. The Socialist Party of California freely indulges in reactionary anti-immigration policies catering to the pro-capitalist A.F. of L., while in the South they echo the sentiments of the race-hating elements by refusing to organize the negroes in other than separate branches; while in the East and Middle West (as well as elsewhere) they cater to the reactionary middle class (small taxpayers) notions of 'clean government', the lowering of taxes, and anti-graft issues, etc., all of them issues, which are of no concern to the workers, . . ."¹

The Party Press. The Socialist Labor party has held that the absence of a party press (true in the S.P. until about 1936) resulted in the growth of many varieties of socialism within the party, which often contradicted each other and gave rise to general confusion.

"As to the question of Party owned press, the Socialist Labor Party holds that if the Party does not own its press, the press will own the Party, which again means, as is so well illustrated in the Socialist Party, that as many different individuals as are found in the S.P. owning papers, each one with a different conception of Socialism and tactics, as many different factions are

⁴S.L.P., The Socialist Movement, pp. 9-10.

¹Ibid., pp. 8-9.

created within the organization, rendering it largely ineffective. Unity of thought must precede unity of action. . . ."¹

The S.P. since 1936. As has been intimated, the Socialist Labor party has been aware of the recent developments in the Socialist party.¹ It has looked with indifference upon the quarrel of the Old Guard Socialists and the Militants for control of the party, and has equally condemned both groups.

"While the old guard accuses the militants of trying to Stalinize the party, the militants counter with the accusation that the old guard has attempted a Hitler purge of the party. No doubt both are right.

"Throughout its career the S.P. has professed extreme democracy, the sort of 'democracy' that inevitably leads to despotism. All sorts of notions and opinions, claiming to be socialistic, were democratically tolerated until they clashed and smashed against other notions and opinions. Usually such groups would simply flock by themselves and continue to swear allegiance to the 'party'. Eventually, however, more than half the party departed and became the Communist party. Now, evidently, another contingent is ready to move in the same direction, and is creating the usual uproar and anarchy in doing so.

"When the Kangaroos started splitting in 1899 by their treason to Socialism, and attempted scuttling the S.L.P., they sowed the wind. From time to time since then the S.P. has reaped the whirlwind. Each side today claims that the acts of the other are its finish. Speed the day!"²

"The Socialist party, left wing, right wing and drumsticks (including its offspring, the Communist party, which originated in a similar 'split' soon after the War) is not a party of socialism. It cuts no ice that both wings claim to be Socialist. By their actions, both proclaim themselves parties of reform, whereas Socialism implies revolution. It is not what a man says about himself but his actions that count. The use of the word Socialist by the Socialist party is a misnomer. The Socialist party is as Socialist as a milk bottle, labeled 'milk', but filled with cyanide of potassium is nourishing and healthful."³

The Socialist Labor party has viewed with great suspicion the admission of the Trotskyists into the S.P. in 1936.⁴ It has since also condemned the latter's

¹ Ibid., p. 8.

¹ For details, see history of Socialist party, infra.

² Weekly People, Jan. 18, 1936, p. 4.

³ Weekly People, Oct. 10, 1936, p. 2.

⁴ Weekly People, July 25, 1936, p. 5.

capitulation to the Labor party when it withdrew Norman Thomas⁵ from the New York mayoralty race in favor of La Guardia.⁶ Its move to join the Labor party in New York has been called its "requiem".⁷

The Communist Party

In criticizing the Communist party, the S.L.P. has not been unmindful of the former's change in party line resulting from the Seventh World Congress. It has likewise been cognizant of the Opposition Communist movements. But its main stress has been placed upon those basic elements of Communist philosophy, strategy and tactics to which it has taken exception, and which it has regarded as departures from Marxian fundamentals.

On the whole, the Socialist Labor party has been even more critical of the Communist party and its tactics than of the Socialist party. It has nevertheless placed them both in the same category: " . . . the bourgeois 'Socialist Party' and the Anarcho-Communist party are the obverse and reverse of the same medal."¹ It has, moreover, held the Socialist party responsible for the Communist movement which it has regarded as an outgrowth of S.P. principles and tactics.

" . . . Anarcho-Communism was bred and nurtured in the corrupt soil of Socialist party fusion, confusion and anti-Marxism. It was in the S.P. that the Anarcho-Communists received their lessons in hooliganism; it was there that the 'technique' of fighting Marxism (the S.L.P.) to the tune of 'revolutionary' phrases was perfected. What the Anarcho-Communist hoodlums are doing now, is what the S.P. followers (or many of them) were doing twenty-five or thirty years ago, as the older generation of Marxists so well remember. As ye have sown, so shall ye reap. The S.P., that 'huge machine for lying about Socialism' fathered the tactics which have now reached full efflorescence in the hooliganism of the Anarcho-Communists."²

⁵Ibid., Sept. 26, 1936, p. 1.

⁶Ibid., Oct. 9, 1937, p. 4.

⁷Ibid., Nov. 26, 1938, p. 4.

¹Petersen, Revolutionary Milestones, p. 5; Virus of Anarchy, p. 10.

²S.L.P., Communist Heckling, p. 1.

The Socialist Labor party's indictment of the Communist party is most sweeping and severe. It likens Communists to "Madmen Leading the Blind".

"Every Christ calls forth an anti-Christ; the noblest of portraits suggests its own caricature, and true Marxism is plagued with a spurious 'Marxism' which in every particular respect is the direct antithesis of genuine Marxism. There is but one genuine Marxism, but there are variations of spurious 'Marxism' One of these evil fruits is that other variety of spurious Marxism known in this country as Anarcho-Communism. Being the latest, and most thoroughly in keeping with the anti-social and anarchic tendencies of the present period of social disintegration, it is, like so many 'novelties', seized upon eagerly by the individualists, the cynics, the socially disillusioned, the derelicts -- in short, by the slum elements, the silkhatred as well as the ragged kind. . . ."3

" . . . The difference, then, between the Anarcho-Communists and the S.L.P. in this particular respect is that whereas the Anarchists lie out of the whole cloth about the S.L.P., the Socialist Labor Party proves its charges to the hilt"4

" . . . Anarcho-Communism as a whole presents a fascinating study in amorphic social pathology"5

In spite of this blanket indictment, the Socialist Labor party has reluctantly admitted that there are two entries to be made on the "Credit side" of the Communist party:

" (1) They have broken away from the S.P. pure and simple politicalism and they seem to have at least an inkling of the true function of the political Movement of Labor. This implies recognition of the inevitable abolition of the Political State by the triumphant proletarian revolution. But this also implies the organization of the Working Class on the economic field into a class-conscious revolutionary body and on that score they again vitiate their position, as will be shown when we come to cast up their Debit side.

" (2) They have broken with the ambiguous, straddling position of the S.P. regarding international relations, have repudiated the Second International and endorsed the Third, and have taken their stand squarely on the subject of the Russian Revolution."6

As with the S.P., the Socialist Labor party's specific criticisms of the Communist party will be discussed under these divisions: theoretical analysis of Marxism; strategy and tactics. A concluding section will discuss the S.L.P.'s

³Petersen, Burlesque Bolshevism, p. 52.

⁴Ibid., p. 37.

⁵Petersen, Virus of Anarchy, p. 23.

⁶S.L.P., Manifesto of the Socialist Labor Party, pp. 17-18.

criticism of the C.P.'s new party line, adopted in 1935.

Theoretical Analysis: Not Marxism but Bakuninism. The Socialist Labor party has contended that the advocacy of violence by the Communist party is derived from Bakunin,¹ not Marx, hence the latter's members are called Anarcho-Communists by the S.L.P.

"The term 'Communism' as applied to the so-called Communist party of America is, strictly speaking, a misnomer. Communism in its original sense covered a state of society wherein equality amidst general poverty prevailed

" . . . Hence the use of the term 'Communism' became doubly misleading -- first, because it was intended to imply Marxism for which there already was an excellent designation, namely, Socialism. And, second, because it was intended to reflect economic and social conditions which existed nowhere outside of Russia.

" . . . Its mixture of reform advocacy and physical force pure and simple (bloody uprisings, insurrections, civil war, etc.) marked it definitely as an Anarchist movement, well deserving the designation of Anarcho-Communist which is now employed by American Marxists."²

"Though Anarcho-Syndicalism is dying out, it has secured a successor in Anarcho-Communism -- an organization which is recognized by Russia as a bona fide Communist, i.e., Marxian party, though it is everything that Marxism is not. This group is practically repeating the performance of the Anarcho-Syndicalist I.W.W., but it is too fast disintegrating. Split in three or four factions, honeycombed with police spies and agent provocateurs, it is getting ready for the exit prepared for it by the logic of events and the incessant hammering of the S.L.P."³

Advocacy of Violence. The S.L.P. has opposed the C.P.'s advocacy of violence and revolution as the technique of the road to power.¹ It has argued that the workers can never gather together enough arms and ammunitions to defeat the military in a trial of strength.² Its own reliance on the ballot plus industrial unionism has already been discussed.

Dictatorship of the Proletariat.¹ The Socialist Labor party has definitely

¹Petersen, Virus of Anarchy, p. 4; W.Z. Foster, Renegade or Spy? pp. 38-39.

²Petersen, Virus of Anarchy, pp. 7-9.

³De Leon, Burning Question of Trade Unions, Introduction, p. 5.

¹Petersen, Virus of Anarchy, pp. 9, 26.

²Petersen, Proletarian Democracy vs. Dictatorships and Despotism, pp. 55-59.

¹Petersen, Revolutionary Milestones, pp. 23-27; Burlesque Bolshevism, pp. 57-59.

rejected a "dictatorship of the proletariat" on these grounds: (1) the application of Marx's doctrine depends upon existing conditions in the country where it is to be applied; (2) the doctrine has had validity for agricultural Russia but not for industrialized United States; (3) there is no need for a dictatorship in the United States since there is nobody to be dictated to; (4) De Leon's ideas on Industrial Unionism provide amply for any transitional era in the United States.

"The essence of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat is supreme working class power, with complete absence of, or suppression of all non-working class elements in so far as the transfer of power and the maintenance of the new form of government are concerned. . . ."2

"The S.L.P. does not advocate the dictatorship of the proletariat for the simple reason that the very idea is preposterous in a nation such as America, where the workers are in the majority, and where industry is so developed that an Industrial Union Government is possible immediately after the revolution -- without the workers' having to pass through the agony of a long, intermediate period of preparing for the Socialist Industrial Government."3

"So important a factor is the presence of a peasantry considered by Lenin, that he observes (in his refutation of Kautsky's plea for 'bourgeois democracy') that 'if Kautsky had still remembered it, he could not have denied the need for a proletarian dictatorship in a country in which the small peasant producer is predominant.' ('The Proletarian Revolution.') The logic of this statement is that in a country where this peasantry is conspicuous by its complete absence, where, in short, the fact of complete industrialization, even of agriculture, is so obvious as to impress itself upon the dullest intellect -- that in such a country there is no need of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat in the contemporaneous sense of continental Europe of 1871 or Russia of 1917. . . ."4

" . . . The lack of industrial development is one of the chief cornerstones, in fact, the chief one, upon which rests the particular application of the 'Dictatorship of the Proletariat' by Marx, Engels and Lenin. . . ."5

" . . . Dictatorship inevitably implies groups to be dictated to. There were such groups in the time of Marx, groups which inevitably would exert a powerful or determining influence on the Proletarian Revolution, particularly the vast number of peasants and millions upon millions of the petty bourgeoisie, all of whom, in the then undeveloped state of capitalism, were still necessary and on the whole essential factors in production. These elements are largely absent today, and to the extent that they survive they have ceased absolutely

²Petersen, Karl Marx and Marxism, p. 57.

³Socialist Labor Party, Communist Heckling, p. 2. Also see Weekly People, Aug. 3, 1935, p. 3.

⁴Petersen, Proletarian Democracy vs. Dictatorships and Despotism, p. 43.

⁵Idem.

to be factors, essential or otherwise, in social production. The social revolution today, therefore, would proceed (in so far as economic sufficiency is concerned), entirely in disregard of any factor in society except that of the industrially organized working class. Under such conditions there is obviously nothing or nobody to be dictated to except in the ordinary sense of maintaining order exactly as must be done in any form of society, however much it may be lauded as the ultimate in pure democracy."⁶

" . . . I have already shown that the essence of Proletarian Dictatorship, as understood by Marx and the great expounders of Marxism, is supreme power by the working class, to the exclusion of all capitalist and bourgeois elements, and with parliaments and constituent assemblies utterly destroyed. All of this is not only implied in the concept of De Leon's Industrial Union and industrial government, but it is, indeed, an indispensable condition for the realization of the Socialist or Industrial Republic. . . ."⁷

"Properly analyzed and understood there is, then, no contradiction between Marx's phrase 'Proletarian Dictatorship' and De Leon's Industrial Union government. . . . 'Proletarian Dictatorship' obviously loses its present political implication in a country like ours where the victorious class is, by the very fact of its triumph having been possible, in supreme economic control. . . ."⁸

L. G. Raisky, whose exposition of De Leonism was published by the Socialist Labor party,⁹ has made this brief criticism of De Leon:

"From the Bolsheviks De Leon was divided by his failure to understand the inevitability and necessity of a transitional epoch in the form of a dictatorship of the proletariat. He believed that the Socialist revolution would at once eliminate the State, and that society would step right into developed Socialism on the morrow of the revolution. This explains De Leon's denial of the need for a party, after the revolution. . . ."¹⁰

The Socialist Labor party has scored Raisky for what it has regarded as a reckless statement:

"Mr. Raisky apparently, has failed to make as close a study of Lenin as one might reasonably expect of an admirer so ardent and articulate. Had he been as familiar with Lenin's writings as his professed acceptance of 'Leninism' implies, he could scarcely have been guilty of the misconception expressed in his reference to the 'inevitability and necessity of a transitional epoch in the form of a dictatorship of the proletariat'. . . ."¹¹

⁶Petersen, Karl Marx and Marxism, pp. 57-58.

⁷Petersen, Proletarian Democracy vs. Dictatorship and Despotism, p. 39.

⁸Ibid., p. 52.

⁹Raisky, Daniel De Leon.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 30.

¹¹Ibid., p. 30, footnote.

And then follows a quotation from Lenin's speech, "Our Relation to the Peasants", delivered in 1921 at the 10th Congress of the Russian Communist party.¹²

Strategy and Tactics: Fight for Immediate Demands. For reasons mentioned in discussing the Socialist party, the S.L.P. has opposed the immediate demands (unemployment relief, social insurance, soldiers' bonus, lower taxes, farm relief, etc.) formulated by the Communist party, of which it has said:

" . . . They represent a hopeless mixture of pure lunacy, almost unbelievable imbecility, unscrupulous crookedness, brazen insolence and total contempt for the intelligence of those whom (presumably) they desire to reach"1

Mass Action. The Socialist Labor party has opposed the "mass action" of the Communist party which it has interpreted to mean ". . . opposing the armed force of 'the bosses' with armed force of the workers. . . ."1

Of this it has declared:

" . . . Assuming that it is your sincere intention to be what you claim to be: a true political Movement of Labor, it is not your function to 'mass-act'; it is your function to obey the Marxian mandate to 'raise a bulwark against the power of capital', and to raise that bulwark in order to shield, to protect, the economic Movement of Labor. Renting about 'mass action' does not so shield and protect; on the contrary it invites and furnishes a pretext for new and more vicious assaults by the power of capital upon the economic Movement of Labor, while you, BY YOUR VERY CONDUCT, render yourself impotent to raise that bulwark. It is not your function to 'mass-act' at all. Action, 'mass' or otherwise, is the function of the economic Movement of Labor when the time is ripe and when you, in the proper performance of your true function, have aided, soberly and intelligently, the building up of that power which the economic Movement of Labor alone can CONTAIN AND WIELD. . . ."2

" . . . In Russia, the revolutionary movement culminated in 'mass action' as naturally as water runs down hill, because the masses were in motion and in action; but that phenomenon causes the 'Communist' to demand 'mass action' here and at once, though none of them is able to give one a clear definition as to what he means by that term and how he thinks the 'masses' entirely aside from the question of their make-up -- can act in an organized and effective manner. . . ."3

¹²Idem.

¹Petersen, Virus of Anarchy, p. 24.

¹Ibid., p. 26.

²S.L.P., Manifesto of the Socialist Labor Party, pp. 38-39.

³Ibid., p. 19.

Futile Antics. The Socialist Labor party has objected to extreme forms of behavior which it has alleged is part of Communist tactics and is sanctioned by the Communist party, whose members are "howling dervishes"; "they gravitate to the Anarcho-Communist movement, which encourages yelling and screaming and mistakes it for revolutionary activity."¹

An example of what the S.L.P. objected to is the case of a Communist girl who had shackled herself to a pole in order to protest the unjust imprisonment of German Communists.

" . . . She was chained to the lamppost so that she would have time to shriek her robotlike, senseless gibberish before the police could remove her. . . . She is typical of the wild-eyed, brutalized, hairbrained 'Communist youth' which forms the backbone of the Anarcho-Communist movement, . . ."²

" . . . Do these people act as foolishly as they talk? It is a matter of general knowledge that the Anarcho-Communists, at outdoor or indoor meetings, act like escaped lunatics. . . ."³

" . . . But as matters stand today, with the so-called 'revolutionists' shouting their ill-digested phrases from the housetops instead of applying themselves to the sober and not very exciting task of organizing the Working Class MIGHT towards constructive revolutionary ends, each seeking to outdo the other in gushing rodomontade, who knows but what the capitalist class may not be able to turn a goodly portion of that potential Working Class power against the revolutionary Working Class Movement, and, temporarily at least, trample it in the dust? It may be taken for granted that lunacy, or the appearance of lunacy, is not conducive to inspiring confidence in the broad ranks of the Working Class as to either the means or methods of those who so deport themselves."⁴

Disruptive Tactics and "hooliganism". The Socialist Labor party has alleged that the Communist party resorts to disruptive tactics of all sorts to break up meetings of radical groups not of its following.

" . . . The Anarcho-Communists are used chiefly today as a weapon wielded by the capitalist class against the Socialist Labor Party. . . . The Anarcho will hold a meeting in a certain place. They will deliberately provoke a riot, and if other means fail they will purposely bait the police. Result, meeting broken up, heads clubbed, the Anarchos advertised and their

¹Petersen, Virus of Anarchy, p. 14.

²Petersen, Burlesque Bolshevism, p. 53.

³Petersen, Virus of Anarchy, p. 28.

⁴S.L.P., Manifesto of the Socialist Labor Party, p. 22.

capacity for anti-revolutionary activities increased. As a further result, when a Socialist Labor Party meeting is later held it too is broken up, the excuse given by the police -- 'fear of riots'. Thus the police-manipulated, and police-inspired Anarcho-Communists aid and abet the ruling class in preventing the revolutionary Marxian Socialist Labor Party from presenting its message of working class emancipation to the wage slaves."¹

" . . . At one time in Brooklyn, N.Y., they actually brought a brass band, set up a stand next to our speaker, and started an unearthly noise as soon as we attempted to talk, until the police had to be appealed to to evict them from the neighborhood where we were holding our accustomed meeting. . . ."²

"In Gloversville, New York, Aaron M. Orange, the Socialist Labor Party candidate for governor, had been holding a successful series of meetings and the Communist hecklers had been routed in his answer to their questions. At the next meeting 'inspired' hoodlums appeared, 'armed' with rotten tomatoes, corn stalks and the like. This, being 'amusingly' reported in the press, inspired other hoodlums so much that when the next week the C.P. attempted to hold a meeting they were routed by their own kind of rotten tactics. . . ."

Falsification of Marxian Documents. The Socialist Labor party has accused the C.P. of forging and falsifying passages in Marxian documents in order to present its own cause in a better light. Specifically, the S.L.P. has charged the C.P. with "inventing" a non-existent introduction by Engels to Marx's Class Struggles in France.¹

Another example involved alleged deletions from an essay on De Leon by Raisky² of passages favorably disposed to the trade union position of the S.L.P.³

"The part in brackets which, as we see, refers specifically to the Socialist Labor Party, was simply and conveniently eliminated from the text published in the Communist, thus proving the Anarcho-Communist as unscrupulous and narrowly censorious, and as ignorantly prejudiced against, and fearful of revolutionary Marxism as his bourgeois and clerical confreres."⁴

¹Petersen, Virus of Anarchy, p. 9.

²Socialist Labor Party, Communist Heckling, p. 3.

¹S.L.P., Who Are the Falsifiers? p. 5.

²Petersen, Foreword to Raisky, Daniel De Leon, p. 3.

³Ibid., p. 19-20.

⁴Ibid., p. 20.

The C.P. since 1935: The People's Front. The S.L.P. has completely condemned Popular Frontism and the Democracy-versus-Fascism orientation adopted by the Communist International at its Seventh World Congress. It has declared that this policy was adopted to simplify the task of carrying out the Soviet Union's foreign policy of hoping to check its fascist enemies by alliances and collective security pacts with the "Democratic" powers.¹

" . . . the Communist International has become, in deed as well as in fact, the political football of the foreign policy of the Soviet Union."²

The People's Front has been called a sham, and but another name for the discredited class collaboration policies of the Social-Democrats. In essence, the S.L.P. has observed, there is no difference; both have made agreements and compromises with the capitalist class at the expense, and to the detriment, of the workers. Popular Frontism also, in effect, has constituted a complete abandonment of the class struggle and an alliance with capitalist imperialism.³

"The spectacle of Lenin's disciples returning to the Kautskyan Social Democratic vomit is not altogether an edifying one. Yet, as said, it is the logical outcome of the anti-Marxist policy of appeal to the 'masses', the apotheosis of 'the leader', the ridiculous 'revolutionary' phrase-mongering -- in short, it is the inevitable result of the burlesque character of the whole 'Communist' movement. The 'new' class collaboration (if actually consummated) will obviously have the same disastrous results as did the Social Democratic class collaboration, with increasing misery and blood-letting, and added fatal delays in the working class emancipation, as the heavy price to be paid by the world proletariat."⁴

" . . . The crackbrained Bakuninistic Communist may not be aware of it, but even he is moved by a certain kind of logic. For, as has been well said, error has its logic as well as truth. During the last year or two there has proceeded from the camp of Anarcho-Communism the 'battle' cry (with its obvious variations): 'Huge People's Front', 'United Front', 'Common Front', or just plain 'People's Front', which, translated, means: Common cause with the bourgeoisie -- against the working class. If the imbecile Anarcho-Communists were capable of reasoning, they would know that the logic of that 'united front' slogan is a complete repudiation of the class struggle, and identity of interests with the arch-enemies of the proletarian movement. . . ."⁵

Collective security has also been condemned as an example of class collabora-

¹Weekly People, Aug. 17, 1935, p. 4; Aug. 24, 1935, p. 4; Sept. 11, 1937, p. 1.

²Weekly People, Sept. 28, 1935, p. 3.

³Weekly People, Aug. 10, 1935, p. 1; July 11, 1936, p. 5; Dec. 26, 1936, p. 4; Dec. 24, 1938, p. 4.

⁴Weekly People, Aug. 24, 1935, p. 4.

⁵Weekly People, Jan. 30, 1937, p. 3.

tion which will lead nowhere, but will spell doom for the Soviet Union and workers everywhere; capitalist allies cannot be depended upon; they will turn upon the U.S.S.R. as soon as their class interests demand it.⁶

Support of Roosevelt. The S.L.P. has condemned the Communist party's support of Roosevelt.¹ His policies are nowise measures leading to socialism. At heart Roosevelt has espoused the cause of private enterprise and private profit; and he will gladly support American imperialists in another war.²

Unity at All Costs. The S.L.P. has argued that unity with the enemies of the working class is of dubious value. Consequently it has opposed the C.P.'s efforts to organize a Farmer-Labor party;¹ it has also ridiculed the efforts of the C.P. to woo the Roman Catholic church, referring to the episode as the "Communist-Catholic Romance".²

"The platform of Browder and his party, accordingly, is that capitalism must be preserved lest we get something worse than capitalist exploitation, misery and poverty! And the reform demands of the Anarcho-Communists are in keeping with that chief 'plank'."³

" . . . In their craze for unity and mass movement these latter-day leaders of Communism are ready to join hands with anybody and anything and, in their fright over Fascism, they appear to have totally forgotten that the real enemy of the working class is capitalism. . ."⁴

⁶Weekly People, Sept. 7, 1935, p. 1; Oct. 19, 1935, p. 5; March 14, 1936, p. 4; Dec. 19, 1936, p. 3; Dec. 11, 1937, p. 4; Oct. 1, 1938, p. 4; Oct. 22, 1938, p. 4; Nov. 12, 1938, p. 4; Nov. 19, 1938, p. 1.

¹Weekly People, June 20, 1936, p. 4; Sept. 12, 1936, p. 4; Oct. 17, 1936, p. 2.

²Ibid., Oct. 31, 1936, p. 5; Nov. 7, 1936, p. 2.

¹Ibid., Feb. 13, 1937, p. 5.

²Ibid., Dec. 10, 1938, p. 4.

³Ibid., Oct. 17, 1936, p. 2.

⁴Ibid., Oct. 12, 1935, p. 4.

The Socialist Labor Party and Lenin.

The attitude of the Socialist Labor party towards Lenin has stood in curious contrast to its position on the American Communist party and the Third International. Despite its unconcealed hostility towards the Comintern and its American affiliate, there has been an unbounded admiration and enthusiasm for Lenin, who has been constantly quoted, invoked, and declared to be in close agreement with De Leon on all essentials.¹

"De Leon and Lenin stand out unqualifiedly as the foremost leaders of the Socialist Revolutionary Movement since Marx; both building on the cornerstones laid by the great founder. The development of Socialist revolutionary tactics, both as expressed by 'Leninism' in Russia and by 'De Leonism' in America, go to emphasize the strength and soundness of the foundation laid by Marx. . . ."²

The attitude of the S.L.P. towards Lenin may be summed up briefly: (1) In some respects, De Leon anticipated Lenin; Lenin, in turn approved of De Leon's Industrial Unionism when he became familiar with its principles. (2) The policies of the American Communist party in respect to the dictatorship of the proletariat is one of misunderstanding Lenin; its policies do not embody Leninism but rather Bakuninism and Anarcho-Communism.³

The following is part of a quotation from Arthur Ransome, "Six Weeks in Russia in 1919" which has frequently appeared on the front or back cover of many De Leon pamphlets:

"Lenin said he had read in an English Socialist paper a comparison of his own theories with those of an American, Daniel De Leon. He had then borrowed some of De Leon's pamphlets from Reinstein (who belongs to the party which De Leon founded in America), read them for the first time, and was amazed to see how far and how early De Leon had pursued the same train of thought as the Russians. His theory that representation should be by industries, not by areas, was already the germ of the Soviet system. . . ."⁴

¹Petersen, Proletarian Democracy vs. Dictatorships and Despotism, passim.

²Johnson, Karl Marx, Forty Years After, pp. 16-17.

³Petersen, Revolutionary Milestones, pp. 23-27; Proletarian Democracy vs. Dictatorships and Despotism, p. 47.

⁴De Leon, Socialist Reconstruction of Society, p. 78.

The following excerpts have also appeared in many S.L.P. pamphlets:

"Lenin said: 'The American Daniel De Leon first formulated the idea of a Soviet Government, which grew up on his idea. Future society will be organized along Soviet lines. There will be Soviet rather than geographical boundaries for nations. Industrial Unionism is the basic thing. That is what we are building.'-- Robert Minor in the New York World, Feb. 8, 1919."⁵

"Premier Lenin is a great admirer of Daniel De Leon, considering him the greatest of modern Socialists -- the only one who has added anything to Socialist thought since Marx. . . . It is Lenin's opinion that the Industrial 'State' as conceived by De Leon will ultimately have to be the form of government in Russia. - - John Reed, May 4, 1918."

The S.L.P. has also contended that Lenin's conception of dictatorship of the proletariat and its own analyses of proletarian democracy and industrial unionism are one and the same.⁶ The misconceptions have been those of the present Communist party and not of Lenin.⁷

" . . . De Leon did not fail to understand the necessity of a transitional period in the form of a dictatorship of the proletariat in a country like Russia with little industrial development and a tremendous peasant population. . . . But he also saw . . . what even today the most advanced of the Russian revolutionists fail to comprehend, namely, that in a country where industry is so highly developed as in America, and where the working class is both drilled and thoroughly organized for industrial operation, if that working class is also organized on the industrial field in a revolutionary industrial organization, it is possible -- nay, more than possible, inevitable -- for the political organization, as rapidly as it can be accomplished, to turn over all power of government to the Industrial Union. . . ."⁸

In a paragraph captioned "Lenin's Clear Vision", the Socialist Labor party has concluded:

"Lenin here virtually draws a picture of capitalism in the United States and he says, in effect, that all the transition measures which make the 'Proletarian Dictatorship' necessary in Russia are unnecessary here, and that an immediate transition to Socialism is possible for the workers here -- provided, of course, the workers here organize their 'peculiar' form of power, the Industrial Union. . . ."⁹

⁵Idem.

⁶Petersen, Proletarian Democracy vs. Dictatorships and Despotism, p. 45.

⁷Idem.

⁸Petersen, in appendix to Raisky, Daniel De Leon, pp. 32-33.

⁹Petersen, Proletarian Democracy vs. Dictatorships and Despotism, p. 47.

Attitude Towards the Soviet Union

In spite of its relentless criticism of the Communist International, particularly of the line adopted in 1935, the S.L.P. has nevertheless gone on record as giving sympathetic but critical support to the Soviet Union in its efforts to build socialism and establish world peace.¹ It has contrasted the comparatively successful socialization within the U.S.S.R. with Stalin's foreign policy which it has characterized as a great blow to the international working class movement.²

Moscow Trials. The S.L.P. has inclined to the view that the Moscow trials were not "frame-ups", and that the confessions of Radek, Zinoviev, Kamenev and others were genuine; that the defendants did what they did to further their honest convictions. Only regarding the part played by Trotsky, if any, has the S.L.P. expressed doubts.¹

"On the basis of their confessions the men on trial in Moscow stand self-condemned, as they are condemned by all decent and sincere revolutionists. But it is a condemnation mixed with pity, granting that their motives were pure, as we have good reason to believe to be the case, even though the motive is smudged by the immoral Jesuitical principle."²

Summary Criticism. The Socialist Labor party has thus contrasted itself with the Communist party:

"The Anarcho-Communists and the bourgeois Socialist Party, with their capitalist allies, are the obverse and reverse of the same medal. The Socialist Labor Party alone in this country voices the revolutionary aspirations and needs of the proletariat.

"The Anarcho-Communists rant. The Socialist Labor Party reasons.

"The Anarcho-Communists shout for 'mass action'. The Socialist Labor Party pleads for class action.

"The Anarcho-Communists preach violent uprisings, insurrections, with defeat inevitable for the unorganized workers. The Socialist Labor Party urges Industrial Unionism (in place of corrupt craft unionism) and frowns on senseless and futile acts of violence.

¹Weekly People, May 9, 1936, p. 3; Sept. 4, 1937, p. 6.

²Ibid., Nov. 20, 1937, p. 4.

¹Weekly People, Feb. 6, 1937, p. 4.

²Weekly People, Feb. 6, 1937, p. 4.

"The Anarcho-Communists yell 'immediate demands' and reforms when not exhorting to violence. The Socialist Labor party spurns reforms and patching up of capitalism, and firmly voices its revolutionary demand for the unconditional overthrow of capitalism.

"The Anarcho-Communists foment strikes which almost invariably play into the hands of the bosses and the American Federation of Labor, and reduce the workers' conditions still more. The Socialist Labor Party discourages strikes, and encourages intelligent industrial class organization, the existence of which will cause the bosses to 'throw tubs to the whale', i.e., to yield concessions to the workers in greater measure than any strike could effect, in order to check revolution.

"In short: The Anarcho-Communists represent stark Reaction. The Socialist Labor Party represents Working Class Revolution."¹

The Socialist Labor Party Faces the Future

The Socialist Labor party is quite convinced that it has a significant role to play in the coming years, a role which will become increasingly more important with the passing of the time. It is the coming hope of the world, even as the Russian revolution was that very thing in its own day.

"The Socialist Labor Party stands alone -- the 'rock of the revolution'. In the words of De Leon:

" 'At that crisis, when the people who have allowed themselves to be misled . . . will be running around like chickens without a head, there will be one beacon light in the land burning as clear in that darkness as it is burning amidst the clouds today; one beacon, whose steady light will serve as a guide; whose tried firmness will inspire confidence; and whose rock-ribbed sides will serve as a natural point of rally from which to save civilization.'

"After forty years that beacon light still burns bright and steady. It will continue so to the end."¹

"Two bright stars have been sending forth light and hope in the dark night of capitalism to the exploited workers in the course of the last fifty years or so. In Russia the proletarian star of emancipation rose twenty years ago. That star, however, has dimmed in the course of the years, until it is but a flickering spark at this crucial hour. . . . The other bright star is that of the Socialist Labor Party of America, which for half a century or so has preached the message of Proletarian Emancipation, . . . And that star in the West, the Socialist Labor Party, which rose in the corrupt and complacent capitalism of half a century ago, will continue to shine, with increasing brilliance and luster, as the Morning Star of Hope for the exploited world proletariat -- but, above all, for the exploited workers of America."²

¹Petersen, Virus of Anarchy, p. 10.

¹Petersen, Revolutionary Milestones, pp. 28-29.

²Socialist Labor Party, Manifesto on War, pp. 29-30.

CHAPTER VII

THE INDUSTRIAL UNION PARTY

An examination of all available printed literature issued by the Industrial Union party, and a comparison of it with the Socialist Labor party, has disclosed no divergences in principles, strategy, and tactics between the two.¹ The former has resulted from a split with the latter organization which took place about 1932, on personal grounds devoid of any political significance.

The current literature of the Industrial Union party makes no references whatever to the Socialist Labor party (and vice versa), although both parties have continued to agitate for the same objectives in precisely the same way.

¹Executive Committee, Industrial Union Party, C.I.O., Promise or Menace? De Leon, Reform or Revolution; Americanism. Senior, Bankruptcy of Reform. Industrial Unionist (official monthly organ).

PART III

THE SOCIALIST MOVEMENT

CHAPTER VIII

THE SOCIALIST PARTY: HISTORY

1901 - 1932

Organization -- 1901. The Socialist Party of the United States of America was founded at a Unity Convention held in July 1901 in Indianapolis, Indiana. Its two dominant elements were: (1) A minority group which had seceded from the Social Democracy of America (an organization founded in 1897 by Eugene V. Debs and Victor Berger, among others); (2) a faction which had withdrawn from the Socialist Labor Party, under the leadership of Morris Hillquit.¹

The Debs-Berger minority had left the Social Democracy of America as a protest against its projected plan of Socialist colonization in the West, a scheme which it characterized as utopian. It subsequently organized the Social Democratic Party of America before merging with the dissenting S.L.P.~~ers~~ to form the Socialist party.²

The differences separating the Socialist Labor party, headed by De Leon, from the Hillquit wing were more profound and serious, going to the very root of Socialist strategy and tactics. The official S.L.P. had adopted dual union tactics, had taken an irreconcilable stand against the formulation of immediate demands, and was accused of being a thorough-going monolithic party completely dominated by Daniel De Leon.³

Hillquit and his followers, on the other hand, favored co-operation with

¹ Hillquit, History of Socialism in the United States, pp. 330-339. Laidler, History of Socialist Thought, pp. 570-572; Socialism in Thought and Action, pp. 501-503. Socialist Party, U.S.A., Thirty-Fifth Anniversary Journal, pp. 5-6, 30.

² Socialist Party, U.S.A., op. cit., p. 5. Hillquit, op. cit., p. 332. Laidler, History of Socialist Thought, p. 571.

³ Socialist Party, U.S.A., op. cit., pp. 5-6. Hillquit, op. cit., pp. 339-341.

the American Federation of Labor rather than the formation of independent, competing industrial unions. They also demanded a greater degree of party democracy.⁴ As Hillquit later observed, the party envisioned by De Leon was hopelessly sectarian. It could not possibly grow because it was ". . . largely built on the narrow lines of a mere propaganda club, . . ." ⁵

In 1900, Debs was nominated for the presidency by a coalition of the groups which formally became the Socialist Party the following year. He received almost 98,000 votes. In 1904, 1908, and 1912 he ran again as the regular candidate of the Socialist Party, receiving about 424,000, 897,000, and 585,000 votes respectively.⁶

1912 Split. In 1912, the Socialist party underwent its first split. At its Indianapolis Convention in that year, an amendment to its Constitution was proposed barring from membership anyone espousing direct action as a technique of working class action.¹

"Any member of the party who opposes political action or advocates crime, sabotage or other methods of violence as a weapon of the working class to aid in its emancipation shall be expelled from membership in the party."

This clause was directly aimed at William Haywood, a member of the National Executive Committee of the Socialist party, and his followers, who had been instrumental in the formation of the I.W.W. in 1905, or had come under the influence of its doctrines. Haywood's efforts to defeat this amendment failed, and after he was recalled from the N.E.C. of the party, some of his followers withdrew, charging that the S.P. had abandoned the class struggle and had succumbed to reformism and class-collaboration policies.²

St. Louis Declaration: 1917. Although the great majority of European

⁴Idem.

⁵Hillquit, Socialism in Theory and Practice, p. 354.

⁶Laidler, op. cit., p. 571.

¹Socialist Party, U.S.A., op. cit., p. 31.

²Haywood, Bill Haywood's Book, pp. 257-260.

Socialist parties had capitulated at the outbreak war in 1914, the Socialist party of the United States remained adamant in its opposition to American participation in an "imperialist war". At its emergency convention in April, 1917, it passed what has since become known as the St. Louis declaration, ". . . a stirring, militant call for complete opposition to all capitalist wars."¹

Its platform, in part read:

"In all modern history there has been no war more unjustifiable than the war in which we are about to engage."²

As the result of its anti-war, anti-militarism, anti-conscription platform, many Socialists bitterly attacked it and resigned from the party.

"Spargo and several intellectuals, including William English Walling, John Phelps and Rose Pastor Stokes, Upton Sinclair, Allan Benson and Jack London, left the party. The rank and file stood 'pat'."³

At the same time, Eugene V. Debs and other Socialists received long prison terms in federal penitentiaries for attempting to wage a campaign of active opposition to the war.

The 1919 Split. In 1919, the conflict between the Lefts against the Center and Right wings of the party broke forth again with even greater fury. Since the October Revolution, the Left Wing group had become convinced that the correct strategy and tactics to be pursued were those set forth by Lenin and the Bolshevik party of the Soviet Union.¹ They characterized the current program of the Socialist party as one concerned chiefly with reform measures and social legislation.

". . . This moderate Socialism was intended to attract 'tradesmen, shopkeepers and members of the professions', and forgot the proletariat. Compromising with the bourgeois State, this socialism 'fell a prey to social patriotism and nationalism'."²

¹Socialist Party, U.S.A., op. cit. p.31.

²Laidler, Socialism in Thought and Action, p. 458.

³Socialist Party, U.S.A., op. cit. p. 31.

¹Socialist Party, U.S.A., op. cit., pp. 32-33. Laidler, Socialism in Thought and Action, pp. 466-469.

²Oneal, American Communism, p. 48.

The Left Wing's ten-point program included support of industrial unionism, proletarian dictatorship and affiliation with the Third International.³

" 2. The party must teach, propagate and agitate exclusively for the overthrow of capitalism, and the establishment of Socialism through a proletarian dictatorship."⁴

Failing in their efforts to win over the Socialist party to this new orientation, the Left Wing withdrew and formed two rival parties which ultimately united to form the Communist party.⁵

Morris Hillquit, orthodox party theoretician who opposed the Left-Wing orientation, argued that although the success of the Russian Revolution could not be denied, it clearly did not come according to Marx, who had anticipated socialization in a highly-industrialized rather than an agricultural European country.⁶ He went on to argue that Western Europe and the United States would have to proceed differently, and that the parliamentary technique probably offered the greatest prospects of success.⁷

". . . For the Socialist movement in countries like the United States, in which the physical basis for the Socialist transformation is fully developed, but the working class is ludicrously immature politically and intellectually, the immediate need is for primary Socialist education."⁸

Despite the schism in the party, it nominated the imprisoned Debs as its standard-bearer for the presidency in 1920. He received about 920,000 votes in the ensuing election.⁹

From 1920 to 1932, many issues arose in the party, many problems called for

³Ibid., Appendix I, Program of Left Wing Socialists, 1919, pp. 240-242.

⁴Ibid., p. 241.

⁵For further details, see history of Communist party, infra.

⁶Hillquit, From Marx to Lenin, pp. 18-19, 116.

⁷Ibid., pp. 125-138.

⁸Ibid., p. 132.

⁹Laidler, History of Socialist Thought, p. 571.

immediate and pressing solutions. Although Norman Thomas became the party's presidential candidate in 1928 and 1932 (to take the place of Debs who had died in 1926) the basic orientation of the party remained unchanged. The parliamentary technique as the road to power was not seriously challenged. The principles of Socialism, as formulated by Hillquit, Lee, Oneal and others, continued to be the basis of the Socialist party's position.

The "Militant" Movement: 1932 - 1936

Despite the occasional lopping off of left-wing elements, the development of new conditions and the growth of new issues invariably gave rise to other left-wing movements within the party. Prior to the National Convention of 1932, a new left-wing organization, known as the Militants, emerged with a comprehensively formulated program which was offered to the National Convention for its approval.¹

The Militants contended that the fatal experiences of post-war European Socialists had made necessary a re-evaluation of their strategy and tactics; that if they continued to pursue their old policies, they were doomed. The Militants accused the Old Guard who controlled the party of having sacrificed socialism for bourgeois democracy and of having abandoned the class struggle in favor of reformism. Summed up in a few words, they demanded an end to "compromise and opportunism" and a return to Marxian Socialist fundamentals.²

The Militants differed sharply from the controlling elements of the party in these noteworthy respects: (1) Their trade union policies. (2) Their attitude towards the Soviet Union. (3) Their conception of party discipline. (4) Their war position. (5) Their analysis of the conquest of power.

¹ Towards a Militant Program for the Socialist Party of America, p. 21.

² A Militant Program for the Socialist Party of America, pp. 3-4. Towards a Militant Program for the Socialist Party of America, p. 9. Kantorovitch, Towards Socialist Reorientation, pp. 9-13.

Trade Unionism. The Militants believed that the most promising elements ripe for the espousal of socialism were to be found in the trade unions. They urged the party to attempt to give leadership and direction to these workers by adopting progressive and militant trade union policies which would win them over to the Socialist position. They argued for the endorsement of industrial rather than craft unionism. Most important of all, they demanded that the Socialist party abandon its traditional position of neutrality in the trade unions, adopt specific trade union policies binding on its own trade union members, and organize Socialist fractions within these unions.¹

"Above all, Socialists must once more become active in their unions and participate in central labor bodies and labor conventions not only as trade unionists, but as Socialists. Socialists within the trade union movement should organize into groups in order to determine on a policy in their union. These groups should consult with and be guided by the advice of the Labor Committee of the Socialist Party in their locality The efforts of Socialists to commit their unions to the idea of independent political action and the endorsement by their unions of immediate demands advocated by the party must again be vigorously pressed."²

The Soviet Union. The Militants believed that the intransigent attitude taken by many persons in the party towards the Soviet Union required considerable modification. Although Socialist leaders were at that time condemned by the Communist party's theory of social-fascism as agents of capitalism and fascism, the Militants nevertheless maintained that the Soviet Union should be recognized and defended as the first and only proletarian state, and be given friendly, though critical, support.¹

"The Socialist Party recognizes the Soviet Union as the first workers country in which the basis for a Socialist society is being built. It will therefore defend the Soviet Union against all capitalist attacks. . . .

"The Socialist Party does not believe in the infallibility of the policies or leadership of the Soviet Union. It therefore reserves the right to criticize,

¹ Socialist Call, Draft for a Program for the Socialist Party of the United States (Bound Brook Program), pp. 21-22. Towards a Militant Program for the Socialist Party of America, pp. 27-30. A Militant Program for the Socialist Party of America, pp. 4-7. Haim Kantorovitch, "The Socialist Party and Trade Unions," American Socialist Quarterly, (Nov. 1935), Vol. IV, No. 3, pp. 34-44.

² Towards a Militant Program for the Socialist Party of America, p. 30.

¹ Ibid., pp. 33-34.

in a fraternal manner, those policies which it believes to be harmful. It cannot approve the present foreign policy of the Soviet Union, nor the attempted subordination of the international labor movement to that policy.

"The Socialist Party also urges that a much broader workers democracy be introduced into the Soviet structure . . ."²

Conception of Party Discipline. The Militants demanded an end to the characteristically lax discipline prevalent in the Socialist party; local autonomy gave rise to many varieties of socialist strategy and tactics totally at variance with each other. The Militants further demanded that every national, state, and local organization of the party be amenable to the discipline of the NEC, that all party members be compelled to conform to the party line not merely in the party itself but in trade unions, newspapers, and all other organizations where socialists participated.¹

"A revolutionary organization which expects to accomplish the tremendous task of winning the American workers to socialism, must be a disciplined, centralized organization that can control its membership and its institutions.

"The Socialist Party is not such an organization. On the contrary, there exists a looseness of organization, a laxity of discipline, and a confusion of policies that are intolerable in a Socialist Party.

"Discipline is lax. Some Socialists appear to believe that their socialism is only applicable within the confines of the party itself. Socialists must act like Socialists and be guided by the ruling of the party in all their public functions, or in any mass organization of which they may be members, whether these be unemployed leagues, trade unions, fraternal, co-operative, peace or liberal organizations of one form or another. . . ."²

War. The Militants statement of their war position re-affirmed the position taken by the party at St. Louis in 1917 -- adamant opposition to all imperialist war. It likewise expressed its opposition to all forms of collective security pacts and sanctions. It advocated a general strike in the event of war to turn the imperialist war into civil war and establish a Socialist system in the United States.¹

² Socialist Call, op. cit., pp. 26-27.

¹ Towards a Militant Program for the Socialist Party of America, pp. 26-27.

² Ibid., p. 26.

¹ Ibid., pp. 34-35. Draft for a Program for the Socialist Party of the United States, p. 22.

" . . . We must emphasize in our propaganda that the only guarantee against war is socialism itself, that the struggle against war is part of the struggle to overthrow capitalism, and that if an imperialist war does break out we should make every effort to turn it into a class war."²

The Road to Power: Proletarian Dictatorship. The Militants condemned the European Social Democrats for failing to use their power after obtaining it for the establishment of socialism. They therefore urged a realistic approach to the question of the conquest of power. While they did not deny the possibility of obtaining power by a parliamentary majority at the polls, they nevertheless maintained that such power would inevitably be taken away by a counter-revolution of the defeated capitalists if the socialists attempted to use their power for establishing socialism, unless the workers set up some form of proletarian dictatorship (or workers' democracy).¹

"The possibility that a Workers' Party may achieve a parliamentary majority still exists in certain countries. . . In America, such a majority is a possible development in the event that a mass Labor Party is formed and has a rapid growth. These possibilities must be utilized to the fullest degree possible because of the obvious advantages of the legal right to control the government apparatus. This legal right will mean nothing, however, if the workers do not exercise their formal power, and build up, long before they take office, their extra-parliamentary machinery of defense against the inevitable counter-revolution."²

The Revolutionary Policy Committee: 1934-1935

Another left-wing movement in the Socialist party, of short life and duration, was the Revolutionary Policy Committee. In many respects its criticism of the Socialist party was identical with that of the Militants: the need for a new orientation; the abandonment of social reform and the return to Marxian Socialism; unalterable opposition to the support of American participation in imperialist wars; a militant trade union policy, endorsing industrial unionism; and fi-

²Towards a Militant Program for the Socialist Party of America, p. 35.

¹Towards a Militant Program for the Socialist Party of America, pp. 12-16. Draft for a Program for the Socialist Party of the United States, pp. 16-20.

²Draft for a Program for the Socialist Party of the United States, p. 19.

nally, Socialist participation in trade unions as disciplined, organized fractions.¹

The platform of the R.P.C. differed from that of the Militants on three issues: (1) The Labor versus the Farmer-Labor party. (2) The thesis on the Soviet Union. (3) The conquest of power and the establishment of socialism.

Both groups recognized that a mass party, not entirely based on a socialist orientation, might be a necessary intermediary step to break the hold of capitalism upon the American masses. Both groups urged the autonomous participation of the Socialist party in such a movement. The Militants demanded that such a party be a mass Farmer-Labor party;² the R.P.C. advocated a Labor party, based on the trade union movement.³

On the Russian question, both groups demanded recognition of the Soviet Union as the first workers' society; both pledged their support in case of attack by capitalist or fascist powers. The Militants' program voiced opposition to the "rigid one-party dictatorship" existing in the Soviet Union; it further declared its right to offer friendly criticism from time to time. The R.P.C. thesis on the Soviet Union offered no strictures beyond its unqualified support.⁴

On the issue of the conquest of power, again both groups agreed upon the bankruptcy of social reformism as the goal of socialist striving. While the Militants recognized the possibility of a peaceful parliamentary transition to socialism, after which a Socialist regime might be called upon to defend its power from a counter-revolution, the R.P.C. held out no hope for a peaceful acquisition of power; the latter demanded an immediate preparation for the revolutionary crisis and the inevitable struggle for power.⁵

¹Revolutionary Policy Committee, An Appeal to the Membership of the Socialist Party, pp. 7-12.

²Socialist Call, op. cit., p. 38.

³Revolutionary Policy Committee, op. cit., p. 10.

⁴Ibid., p. 12.

⁵Ibid., p. 8.

Charges were hurled at the R.P.C. in the New Leader, official Socialist party organ at the time, that its program "is the baby of the Lovestone Communists" and that Jay Lovestone, leader of the Communist Party Opposition, had both inspired and dictated the program, to gain a foothold in the Socialist party.⁶ In any event, the R.P.C. shortly thereafter disappeared from the scene as an organized faction.

The Socialist Party Since 1936

Struggle for Control of the Party. Beginning with the National Convention of 1932, a struggle ensued for control of the party between the Militants and the Old Guard Socialists. At the Detroit National Convention of June 3, 1934, a Declaration of Principles was adopted which in essence was an acceptance of the position of the Militants on the questions of war and the conquest of power.¹ From thence on the breach between the two factions rapidly widened. At the Cleveland National Convention in May 1936, the Old Guard bolted, leaving the party in control of the Militants. In May 1937, the former established the Social Democratic Federation of the U.S.A.²

It is difficult to write the history of the Socialist party since 1936 with assured objectivity. Little documentary evidence is available, and the basic facts have been interpreted differently by different members of the party. The highlights of the period, however, seem to be the following: (1) Admission of the Trotskyists into the Socialist party, and their subsequent expulsion. (2) The growth of dissension within the ranks of the Militants and the split into two separate groups.

⁶New Leader, March 2, 1935, pp. 14-16.

¹Socialist Party, U.S.A., "Declaration of Principles", American Socialist Quarterly (July 1934), Vol. III, Special Supplement, pp. 5-6.

²A detailed account of this struggle is given in the history of the Social Democratic Federation, infra.

Admission of the Trotskyists - 1936. Beginning early in 1936, the Trotskyists, who had been members of the Workers Party of the United States since 1934, applied for admission to the Socialist party. Numerous reasons existed on both sides to make such a move possible. Foremost among them, the fact that the Socialist party was an all-inclusive rather than a monolithic party made it possible for the Trotskyists to join, even though the latter did not completely see eye to eye with the S.P. on all issues. And again, both organizations were in essential agreement upon what they regarded as the most important question to be faced: the war issue (both opposed sanctions, the League of Nations, collective security pacts, etc.).

Differences of opinion exist concerning the basis upon which the Trotskyists were admitted to the party. While the latter maintain that they actually entered as a group, formally dissolving their own organization in June, 1936,¹ Socialist party officials have disclaimed this, contending that the Trotskyists were taken in on a strictly individual basis.²

"The Trotskyists entered the Socialist Party on the same basis as all other applicants. They were never invited into the Party as a group by Norman Thomas or anyone else. They asked to come in as individuals after they had voluntarily dissolved their own party, giving assurances that they came as Socialists . . ."³

The Trotskyists remained in the party for some fourteen months. During that period unsuccessful attempts were made by them to establish a national left-wing group in collaboration with the Militants. The Trotskyists continued to hold their separate caucus and published the Socialist Appeal until the N.E.C. abolished the publication of caucus papers and magazines. Trotskyists have maintained that during this period they acted as loyal socialists, working in close

¹ New Militant, June 6, 1936, p. 1.

² Socialist Call, Aug. 21, 1937, p. 3.

³ Idem.

co-operation with other elements in the party to carry out its line and decisions. On two points, however, they found themselves in disagreement with the central tendency of the party: their agitation for the formation of a Fourth International and their adamant opposition to participation in a labor or farmer-labor party.⁴

In August 1937, some fifty members of Local New York, known to be Trotskyists, were expelled from that Local by its City Central Committee. Although the former attributed their expulsion to their opposition to the rumored proposal to endorse Mayor La Guardia in the 1936 mayoralty campaign, this was denied by the City Central Committee. Its Executive Secretary declared:

"They were expelled for attempting to undermine the Socialist Party, for loyalty and allegiance to an opponent organization, the Bureau for the Fourth International, and for refusing to abide by the decisions and discipline of the National Convention, the National Executive Committee and the City Central Committee of the Party, and for no other reason.

"The action of the City Central Committee had no connection whatsoever with the matter of conferences with the American Labor Party. . . ."⁵

The ousting of the Trotskyists from Local New York was taken under advisement by the National Executive Committee the following month. The expulsion of the greater number was held to have been unwarranted. Reporting the action taken by the N.E.C., the Socialist Call declared:

"The National Executive Committee decided that an illegally constituted two-thirds expelled the Trotskyites in New York

"The NEC found the Trotskyites guilty of having set up a new party, with an independent public press, in opposition to that of the Socialist Party. The committee called for disciplinary action against all those who associated themselves with this new party and its paper, Socialist Appeal. The NEC also called upon all local and state organizations to open their doors to all those formerly connected with the Trotskyites in the party who were ready to disaffiliate themselves from and repudiate adherence to the Socialist Appeal."⁶

Despite this offer of conciliation to the greater number of expelled

⁴Socialist Appeal, February 1937, pp. 15-19; March 1937, pp. 42-43.

⁵Socialist Call, Aug. 21, 1937, p. 3.

⁶Socialist Call, Sept. 11, 1937, p. 1.

Trotskyists, none returned to the party, leading some Socialist party members to infer that the Trotskyists, long intent upon establishing the American section of the Fourth International, had gone too far in their work of setting up a new organization, the Socialist Workers party, to retreat.⁷

Growth of Dissension among the Militants. Although there were numerous tendencies in the Socialist party, organized and unorganized, the bolting of the Old Guard left the party organization under the control of the Militants. It would be hazardous to say what per cent of the membership was in accord with the new orientation formulated at the National Conventions of 1934 and 1936, but it is certain that at least a majority of the active membership stood behind the Militants.

Almost immediately after the Old Guard exodus, dissension sprang up in the ranks of the Militants. In Local New York, where the cleavage was best seen, two factions arose, the old Militant group (which followed the leadership of Jack Altman, Executive Secretary of Local New York) and the Clarity group (which centered about Herbert Zam, Labor Secretary, and August Tyler, Editor of the Socialist Call).

Few documents are available to indicate the causes of the breach. The consensus of opinion gathered from Socialists of both the old Militant and the Clarity Groups seems to be that three factors explain the rift: (1) The attitude toward the Trotskyists. (2) The question of alignment with the American Labor party movement, especially in New York. (3) The attitude towards the Communist party.

On the matter of admission of the Trotskyists into the party, the Altman group was not favorably disposed. It questioned the good faith of the new applicants. Its members looked with suspicion upon the Trotskyists and suspected them of attempting to "raid the Party" and capture it. The Clarity group, on the other

⁷ Ibid., p. 1.

hand, was willing to work with the Trotskyists as long as there was agreement upon the principled issues which arose, particularly the war question.

The Altman and the Clarity groups also differed greatly on the type of Socialist party they wanted to build. The former desired an anti-capitalist party, close to the masses; the latter seemed more concerned with establishing a militant, revolutionary party to supplant the Communist party which was accused by the Clarity group of pursuing an opportunist, class-collaborationist line. On this basis, the Altman group believed that the time was ripe for working in an American labor party, even though the movement did not develop in the manner hoped for by Socialists and involved some support of non-Socialist policies and candidates. If the new movement was based on the organized trade unions, Altman's followers argued, the S.P. should join.¹

The Clarity group, on the other hand, did not deny the necessity for working in a labor party, but was reluctant to support one controlled by capitalist politicians and dedicated to the perpetuation of the status quo; it also wanted assurances that the Socialist organization would remain intact and that the new party would be organized on a federated basis. It was therefore unwilling to make any commitments to the American Labor party.²

On the question of relations with the Communist party, some members of the Altman group hoped for united action with it because they too favored collective security and the People's Front. The Clarity group, however, was strictly opposed to this orientation, and spurned any common political action with the C.P.

Thus, on the basis of these three issues, the Militants of 1934 no longer thought and acted as a united group.

Reunion of Socialist Party and Social Democratic Federation. Late in 1938

¹Murray Gross, "On a Labor Party", Party Affairs (February, 1937), Vol. I, No. 2, pp. 1-3.

²Tyler, "On a Labor Party", op. cit., pp. 11-17.

negotiations were undertaken between the Old Guard Socialists and the Socialist party to determine whether a basis for a re-unification of forces could be found. At this writing (Feb., 1939) the issue has still not be resolved.

International Affiliation: The Second (Socialist) International

The Socialist Party, U.S.A., is affiliated to the Labor and Socialist (Second) International,¹ founded in Paris in 1889.²

Unlike the Communist International, the Socialist International is not monolithic in its organization and discipline. All sections do not have an identical outlook. While a majority of the Second International is committed to the parliamentary technique for the capture of power and the transition to socialism, a minority exists dedicated to revolutionary socialism. The American Socialist party is part of the latter tendency.

At its Paris Conference, thirteen delegates, including those from the United States, so expressed themselves in a Minority Resolution on the Struggle for Power, which read, in part, as follows:

"The Conference declares that it is not the task of the Socialist parties to attempt to straighten out the capitalist world or even to collaborate in such attempts. It declares on the contrary that by whatever means they are going to achieve power they must not secure the exercise of power within the structure of the capitalist regime but must utilize power in order to destroy the bourgeois state and install the dictatorship of the revolutionary party during the period of Socialist construction."³

Generally speaking, the majority of the sections of the Socialist International has supported collective security and the People's Front movement, contrary to the orientation of the Socialist party in this country.

¹ Socialist Party, U.S.A., Socialist Handbook--1937, p. 71.

² Laidler, Socialism in Thought and Action, p. 483. Hillquit, Socialism in Theory and Practice, p. 355.

³ Ehrlich, The Struggle for Revolutionary Socialism, p. 59.

CHAPTER IX

THE SOCIALIST PARTY : PRINCIPLES OF SOCIALISM

Orientations within the Party

Unlike the Communist party, the Socialist party is not a monolithic organization. It is composed of numerous organized and unorganized viewpoints, both Marxian and non-Marxian in their outlook.

As Norman Thomas, acknowledged spokesman of the party, has declared:

"In these days of much discussion -- some of it helpful -- concerning Socialism, one principle ought to be clear. There is room in the Socialist Party for people who differ about the final road toward Socialism and who differ on how fast we can walk in it. There is not room in the Socialist Party for those who differ about wanting Socialism and not some weak substitute for it. Socialism is not the sum total of reforms possible within capitalism, however valuable some of them may be. Socialism is a new social order which conquers exploitation."¹

Marxian Socialists. Outstanding among the Marxian Socialists who have accepted the revolutionary technique for the conquest of power are some members of the Old Militant group and the supporters of the Clarity group. The perspective of Zam and Tyler, Clarity leaders, bears all the earmarks of a Marxist-Leninist approach.²

Although not an organized tendency, there probably exist within the party some few followers of Kautsky (spokesman for Orthodox Marxism) and Bernstein (founder of Revisionism). The former regard the socialist revolution as the goal, and do not regard revolution necessarily as the means. The latter look forward to a Socialist society at some future date but believe that strong em-

¹ Socialist Call, April 11, 1936, p. 6.

² Socialist Call, Socialist Perspective--1937, passim.

phasis upon social reform in the here-and-now is necessary. Generally speaking, the greater number of the followers of Kautsky and Bernstein withdrew from the Socialist party to join the Social Democratic Federation at the time of the Old Guard split. At best, therefore, only a scattered remnant remains.

Non-Marxian Socialists. In the Socialist Party may also be found persons whose socialism does not derive from Marxian sources alone and who believe that the need for the abolition of capitalism and the establishment of socialism can be demonstrated pragmatically and empirically. While accepting Marx's fundamental analysis of society and the need for a new social order, they believe important phases of the theory and tactics of Marxism must be revised in the light of developments of which Marx knew nothing and could anticipate little. Foremost among those holding this viewpoint are Norman Thomas and Harry W. Laidler.

" . . . Life has a way of modifying generalizations and changing established emphases. Since the appearance of the Communist Manifesto in 1848 or even the writing of the last volume of Das Kapital, there have been profound changes in the basic ideas of our political and economic organizations. Marx's generation knew nothing of the psychology of any of the schools that now compete for public fame. Hegelianism from which Marx derived much of his philosophical approach is virtually a dead philosophy. Ricardo's iron law of wages on which Lassalle relied has long since been disproved. Capitalism may still talk the language of Adam Smith. It has completely outgrown his laissez faire individualism in practise."¹

"Under such circumstances has Marxian socialism been exempt? Has it alone no need of revision? . . ."²

" . . . the battleground of modern socialism is not coextensive with the battleground of Marxism or what was popularly regarded as Marxism fifteen or twenty years ago. . . .

" . . . Men and parties fight for or against socialism without troubling themselves to attack or defend or even to understand, let us say, the theory of value. The great task for us is to continue that intensive study of the cruelties and wastes and wars of capitalism which Marx was the first to analyze after painstakingly amassing the evidence. . . ."³

¹Thomas and Laidler, The Socialism of Our Times--A Symposium, p. xii (Authors' Introduction).

²Idem.

³Ibid., p. 372.

" . . . let us not make Marxism a kind of slogan of salvation which men must accept in our precise formula before they can make socialism the alternative to disaster."⁴

" . . . The record of war and post-war years has shown that the old debate between Marxists and non-Marxists or revisionists has little meaning or significance. Its continuance absorbs energies that may be better employed. .

"The attempt to derive the socialist answer solely from Marxism is not only to waste energy but to deepen the gulf between the theology and the practice of socialist parties in which sincerity and enthusiasm are lost even as they have been lost in the similar abyss within the Christian Church. . . ."⁵

Pacifists and Christian Socialists. Another group within the Socialist party with well-defined principles are the pacifists. Devere Allen, Jesse Wallace Hugban, and Sherwood Eddy are prominent socialists who are also executive members of the War Resisters League, an affiliate of the War Resisters' International. The members of this group have taken the following pacifist vow:

"War is a crime against humanity. I am determined not to support any kind of war, international or civil, and to strive for the removal of all the causes of war."¹

The League has also declared:

"Our object is to unite men and women who have determined to give no support to any war, irrespective of the reasons -- political, religious or humanitarian -- which have led them to take this stand."²

Kirby Page and Reinhold Niebuhr, prominent Socialist party members, are also members of the Fellowship of Christian Socialists, an organization sponsoring socialism as that social system most nearly in accord with Christian ethics. This group also is pacifist in its outlook.³

Kirby Page has said:

"I have been endeavoring to make my position clear that under no circumstances will I participate in armed warfare, whether it be international or

⁴Thomas, As I See It, p. 21.

⁵Thomas, America's Way Out, p. 140.

¹Hugban, What is War Resistance? p. 3.

²Ibid., p. 4.

³Page, Individualism and Socialism, pp. 331-332.

class warfare. Moreover, I will never sanction or approve any kind of armed hostilities. But even if the workers follow the fatal example of their oppressors and resort to retaliatory violence, I shall continue to believe in the justice of their cause, and to give them my non-warlike support. . . ."⁴

As members of the Socialist party, the pacifist wing has opposed the sending of arms and men to aid Loyalist Spain; it has also favored strict neutrality legislation.⁵

Alignments within Socialist Party: 1938

In the matter of actual alignment within the party, the theoretical orientation of most members is no certain indication of what wing of the party they will support.

Although there are numerous factions, three sections are outstanding: the Left-Wing, the Center, and the Right Wing. (These terms are relative within the party. The Trotskyists, for example, call the Left-Wing "Centrists".) This division has no direct reference to whether or not any group is Marxian or non-Marxian in its approach. With the exception of the Left-Wing, the alignments cut across Marxian and non-Marxian lines, being determined more by immediate issues than by differences in fundamental philosophy.

The Left Wing. The basic orientation of the Left-Wing Clarity group has already been given. Its members, composed of the followers of Zam and Tyler of New York, have taken a theoretical position essentially Marxist-Leninist in its approach. The Left-Wing wants an out-and-out party of revolutionary Marxism.

On the fundamental question of the conquest of state power, the left-wingers do not believe that the issue can be settled by the parliamentary tech-

⁴Ibid., p. 325.

⁵Socialist Call, Feb. 13, 1937, p. 4.

nique alone. They are convinced that no ruling class voluntarily surrenders power, and that any attempt to carry out a popular mandate will lead to a capitalist counter-revolution, ultimately resulting in bloodshed and violence. Their advocacy of the assumption of power by the proletariat during a war crisis and the establishment of a workers' democracy is identical in its essentials with the Leninist theory of the seizure of power and the establishment of a proletarian dictatorship.

"The watershed of Socialist theory -- separating the revolutionary from the reformist -- is our conception of the nature of the state.

"The revolutionary believes that the state -- that is, the army and the bureaucracy -- can not be voted out, coaxed out, reformed out, or taken over by popular mandate. The capitalist army and state bureaucracy must be smashed -- and they can only be smashed by force.

"Because this perspective -- smashing the capitalist state machinery in the form of old army and bureaucracy -- is always before the eyes of the revolutionary, he devises a political line which (a) refuses to take responsibility in a bourgeois state, which (b) relies only upon the struggle of the masses to fight against reaction. For that reason, a revolutionary rejects every form, shape or manner of coalitionism, entrance into bourgeois regimes resting upon a capitalist system. Revolutionaries oppose class collaboration in all forms, and therefore reject entirely the concept of the People's Front.

"Lastly, because the revolutionary is not fooled by the form of bourgeois rule (although recognizing the advantages of certain types of rule) he does not believe in supporting a war of a democratic bourgeois regime against a fascist bourgeois regime. Revolutionaries oppose all capitalist wars. Revolutionaries distinguish themselves from pure pacifists in that revolutionaries wish to utilize the forces unleashed by the war to take working class power to build a workers' army, to shatter capitalism and build Socialism on the basis of a workers' democracy!"¹

The Left-Wing thus favors the confiscation of the property of the disfranchised capitalist class.² It opposes any participation in imperialist wars and all efforts to prevent war by collective security pacts; it also opposes the People's Front as a betrayal of Revolutionary Marxism; it supports the Farmer-Labor party in principle, but is critical of working with existing movements on terms offered by the latter.³

The Center. The central tendency of the party is undoubtedly best rep-

¹Tyler, "For a United Party of Revolutionary Struggle!" Socialist Clarity (March 1, 1937), Vol. I, No. 1, p. 8.

²Amicus Most, Socialist Call, Feb. 22, 1936, p. 12.

³Socialist Call, Socialist Perspectives--1937, passim.

resented by Norman Thomas. He is supported by Laidler and the Altman group in New York and by Dan Hoan, veteran Socialist mayor of Milwaukee, and his followers. Save for those issues involving the question of war, he has also been supported by the Pacifist group.

On the question of the conquest of power, the Center rather inclines to the position that the prospects of a peaceful transition, while not certain, cannot be ignored; that after the conquest of power, however, workers may have to defend their hard-won gains from a capitalist counter-revolution.¹

"Thus, while it is impossible to prophesy with certainty whether the change from capitalism to socialism will be a peaceful or a violent one, there are many forces at work which point to a genuine possibility of peaceful change in this country, and the revolutionary movement should strive with might and main to make this possibility an increasing probability as time goes on."²

"I have been talking of a sharp and violent revolutionary crisis. This, we can be sure would not be the deliberate creation of the workers. It would arise out of the breakdown of our capitalist-nationalist structure. The aggressive in flouting and overthrowing such democratic institutions as we have will be taken by the fascist and the war-makers. It will be the business of the workers with hand and brain, the lovers of true peace and true democracy, to make the wars and confusions of a bankrupt society the occasion of the establishment of socialism, of a classless society, of a federation of cooperative commonwealths.

"That cannot be done simply by the ballot in a world gone mad. Indeed, under no circumstances can the working class put its trust simply in the political democracy of which the ballot is a symbol. This is a most inadequate democracy. At no time is the equation true: 'democracy equals pure parliamentarianism'. Always labor must organize its own unions and consumers cooperatives as well as its own political party as instruments in its struggle for the good life. . . ."³

"Capitalism is doomed, it must give way to a Socialist order brought about by the socialization of the principal means of production and distribu-

¹Berenberg, Socialist Fundamentals, pp. 111-114. Page, Individualism and Socialism, pp. 230-231. Laidler, Socializing Our Democracy, pp. 293-297. Kantorovitch, Towards Socialist Reorientation, pp. 18-19. Socialist Call, Draft For a Program for the Socialist Party of the United States, pp. 16-19. Thomas and Browder, Debate: Which Road for American Workers, Socialist or Communist? pp. 35-36. Socialist Party, U.S.A., Socialist Handbook--1937, p. 20.

²Laidler, op. cit., p. 114.

³Thomas, Democracy versus Dictatorship, p. 30.

tion. The Socialist party aims to accomplish this by peaceful and democratic means. However, if the reactionary forces resort to violence in an attempt to prevent the Socialist government from carrying out the people's mandate given by a majority vote, the Socialist government will not hesitate to resort to whatever means may be necessary to crush counter-revolutionary movements and to consolidate the Socialist state. If orderly and democratic means of progress are completely denied us, whether through deliberate fascist plan, through devastating defeat in war, or because of the paralyzing panic resulting from complete capitalist collapse, the Socialist party with the aid of the economic organizations of the producing masses will rally all possible forces to organize and maintain a government of and for the working class.

"We seek full democracy for those who work and serve. That can only be won by ending privilege and taking all powers from the few who corrupt and rob present democracy of its true meaning. Democracy is a worthy means of progress; but true democracy must be created by the workers of the world."⁴

On the question of compensation versus confiscation, the Laidler-Thomas position, which is the more or less accepted thesis of the majority of the party, is that this question cannot be unequivocally answered at this date. If Socialism can be peacefully ushered in then compensation is in order; otherwise not.⁵

" . . . If we can socialize peacefully, and do not do it all at once, compensation is probably better than confiscation. Confiscation for social good is not a crime. Restitution is always right! . . . But practically it would have been better to purchase the freedom of slaves with money than blood. . . . Therefore a socialist program should, I think, provide for substituting at a reasonable value bonds not of the government but of the socialized industry; e.g. coal, for outstanding securities; the bonds to be amortized in 30 years and the income from them to be subject to the heavy, graduated income and inheritance taxes which we socialists would use, in a transition period, not only to provide for government expenses and social welfare but to facilitate the transfer of wealth and the abolition of private property for power. . . ."⁶

"If the basic industries were all socialized at once following a sudden and violent revolution, it is likely that little attempt would be made to compensate private owners.

"If, on the other hand, one industry or series of industries should be socialized at a time, some type of compensation would probably be worked out.

"The problem of compensation vs. expropriation is one of policy rather than of principle. . . ."⁷

Finally, the Center strongly opposes the People's Front and collective

⁴Socialist Handbook--1937, p. 20.

⁵Laidler, op. cit., pp. 116-123.

⁶Thomas, The Socialist Cure for a Sick Society, pp. 25-26.

⁷Laidler, op. cit., p. 117.

security. It favors Socialist participation in a Farmer-Labor party even though under conditions which socialists would not entirely approve.

The Pacifist group has normally supported the Center on all issues save that of the conquest of power. Its members are utterly opposed to any methods involving violence.

"Even hard-boiled Americans have renounced the bosses' weapons of violence and in the conduct of strikes, are exploring more revolutionary avenues of non-violent struggle. We Socialists who guard this heritage of Debs should not be the ones to uphold exclusively those traditional forms of struggle that went out of date with the Paris Commune."⁸

Right Wing. The Right Wing of the party centers chiefly about the orientation of Paul Porter and the Socialist party of Wisconsin which has endorsed his program.¹

In outlining his perspective, Porter has declared he speaks as a Marxist.² The Porter group looks forward to a peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism. It favors compensation to the dispossessed capitalists for their property based upon the issuance of Commonwealth Bonds by the government, depreciating five per cent annually and becoming null and void after twenty years.³

Porter's major departure from the stand taken by the Socialist party is on the question of peace and war, and the methods for stopping fascism. Contrary to the position officially taken by the S.P., he has argued for an American popular front, an international popular front and the preservation of peace by collective security. He has also demanded neutrality legislation and a ban upon the export of war materials.⁴

⁸Edward P. Gottlieb, Letter to Editor of Socialist Call, Dec. 26, 1936, p. 4.

¹Porter, Which Way for the Socialist Party? p. 1.

²Ibid., p. 46.

³Porter, The Commonwealth Plan, pp. 12, 20.

⁴Porter, Which Way for the Socialist Party? pp. 24-25, 29-30.

"If we lived in Europe we would doubtless be compelled to do what the Socialists in France have done, and what they are beginning to do in England, namely.

" a) Unite all those who desire peace in a popular front against war and fascism, even taking control of the government on such a program when the opportunity presents itself;

" b) Strive for a collective security of the nations seeking to avert war, through the League of Nations (admittedly very feeble), through multi-lateral pacts, or through bi-lateral pacts as between France and the Soviet Union.

" c) Arm, under a People's Front government, to the extent that may be necessary to resist a fascist invasion."⁵

Another important respect in which the Wisconsin orientation differs from that of the official position of the S.P. is its opposition to fraction work (or leagues) by Socialists within trade unions and other mass organizations. Any such attempt on the part of Socialists to "dominate the trade unions" is regarded as unwise.⁶

On the Farmer-Labor party issue, the position of the Wisconsin Socialists appears to be similar to that of the Thomas group.⁷ In joining a Farmer-Labor movement, they hold that under no circumstances must the party be liquidated, and it must continue to function as a disciplined group.⁸

Principles of Socialism

The ultimate objective of the Socialist party is to destroy the political and economic foundations of present capitalist society and create a socialist society where the means of production are collectively owned and democratically operated by the working class for use and for the satisfaction of human needs, and not by capitalists for the purpose of enriching themselves. The transfer of political and economic power from the capitalist class to the working class will be the cornerstone on which a new social order

⁵Ibid., p. 24.

⁶Ibid., p. 23.

⁷Ibid., pp. 13-18, 36, 43.

⁸Ibid., p. 18.

will be built.

The State. Although the non-Marxian socialists in the S.P. may not accept the Marxian analysis of the state in toto, they are more or less in agreement upon the basic Marxian conception of its general nature.

Norman Thomas, who finds much in Marxian theory he is unable to accept, has nevertheless declared:

"There have been many theories of the origin and nature of the state. To the socialist, everything that we can learn of human history supports the Marxist doctrine that in the last analysis the loyalties and institutions of the state are now, as they always have been since its early beginnings, the means by which a dominant economic class maintains its power. Government is, or tends to be, the executive committee of that dominant class. There never has been and never can be a pure and true democracy in government while society is divided into economic classes: at the top the exploiters, at the bottom the exploited. And this is true whether the form of society is patriarchal, tribal, feudal or capitalist. History invariably supports the logical inference that those who own will rule. The formulas by which they rule may vary and the concessions which they may have to make to the exploited have greatly changed from time to time, but, whatever the outward forms, the vital power of government remains in the hands of those who control the means of life -- the natural resources, the machinery, the jobs, and hence the means of education and communication."¹

In order to establish a socialist society, the capture of state power is the key question. As has already been indicated, three positions have been advanced within the party on this question.²

Again, during the transition from capitalism to socialism, a workers' democracy is favored. The precise nature of it has not been completely formulated; but Socialists have emphatically asserted that the evils flowing from the Russian dictatorship of the proletariat must be sedulously avoided.³

Although the Socialist party has accepted the Marxian conception of the state as the capitalist instrument for coercion, suppression and exploitation, it denies that the state, stripped of these functions, must necessarily disappear. Socialists have also held the state to be the supreme coercive

¹ Thomas, Democracy versus Dictatorship, pp. 7-8.

² Supra.

³ Thomas, op. cit., pp. 29-30.

control in society and that it can be directed towards the useful ends of achieving and maintaining a Socialist society.

" . . . Socialists oppose the class-state, the State which represents a strong and dominant social group only, but they are not opposed to the State in general, which is the leading organ of sociality. They are not opposed to the State in general because they are convinced that in the future the State will serve all alike and will be a blessing to mankind."⁴

" . . . I share the hopes of socialist theorists that with the establishment of the socialist economic order the coercive functions of the state will be less and less in evidence and that we will come to a commonwealth rather than a state.

"But I see no reason for thinking that in any future time near enough for us to bother about we shall be without an inclusive and powerful organization equivalent in many of its aspects to what we now call the state. To change its name will not change this part of the reality. . . ."⁵

Democracy.¹ Socialists regard the common use of the term "democracy" as amorphous, with inherent contradictions and limitations. They sharply distinguish between their own conception of workers' democracy, which they regard as genuine democracy, worth preserving, and bourgeois-capitalist democracy, which to them is no democracy at all but a bogus democracy.

Without attempting a rigid definition of "workers' democracy" which Socialists have espoused, it should be noted that the Socialist conception of democracy involves the active participation in, and control of, the political and economic destinies of the United States by all farmers, professionals, and workers. This, Socialists hold, is impossible under a capitalist society, where, at best, a nominal political democracy exists which is coupled with an economic autocracy over which workers have relatively little control.

Because of the all-pervasiveness of the economic power which falls into the hands of the capitalist class, even the political power of workers is exceedingly curtailed. Due to their immense wealth, the financial and industrial magnates are able to obtain control of the major political parties,

⁴Sachs, Basic Principles of Scientific Socialism, p. 17.

⁵Thomas, America's Way Out, p. 213.

¹Thomas, America's Way Out, pp. 116-129; Democracy versus Dictatorship, passim. Leask, Democracy in Crisis, passim.

dictate the nomination and election of candidates to office, and close to the opponents of the status quo most avenues for reaching the masses through their control of schools, the press and the radio. Even political democracy thus becomes formal rather than actual when capitalism is wedded to democracy.

" . . . The discipline of capitalist democracy is in decay because the principle of capitalism cannot be squared with the principle of democracy. The one consistently seeks to maintain inequalities which the other, not less consistently, seeks to abolish. So long, as I have pointed out, as a capitalist society is in a position to make concessions to the democratic principle, the inherent contradiction which comes from its adoption of a democratic form is obscured; and people give allegiance to its processes by reason of the benefits its success enables it to confer upon them. But once it ceases to be successful, it ceases to be able to make concessions to the principle of democracy. . . . It becomes obvious that the authority of those who possess political power is limited by the will of those who own the instruments of production. . . ."²

In short, Socialists have stated, genuine democracy, where workers have actual political control over the state and economic control over industry, is possible only under a Socialist society.

" . . . What we have called democracy in modern nations has always suffered from inevitable elements of hypocrisy because of the class division of society. Men who have glibly proclaimed their affection for government 'of the people, by the people, and for the people', in politics, have preached and practiced government of the workers, by the owners, for profit, in economic life. There has been a dangerous dualism between economic oligarchy and political democracy, and this dualism has been rooted less in the theory of democracy than in the nature of our society and the relation of the state to it."³

Socialists do not confuse their opposition to capitalist democracy with their support of democratic rights of workers under the system they are attempting to change. They constantly urge the adoption of political measures which will give workers greater control and power under the inadequate system of political democracy now in operation. Although they have no illusions about the certainty of capturing state power through the ballot, they have

²Laski, op. cit., pp. 215-216.

³Thomas, Democracy versus Dictatorship, p. 9.

nevertheless supported such political measures as: a constitutional amendment to curb the power of the United States Supreme Court; proportional representation in local elections; the extension of the civil service system; guarantees of freedom of speech and press; etc.

"The Socialist party proclaims anew its faith in economic and political democracy. A system of complete democracy is only possible, however, in a classless society wherein the government is the servant of the entire people and not the tool of a ruling class. So long as classes exist, both the form and content of any existing system of political democracy will be conditioned and limited by and subordinated to the maintenance of class rule. In such class systems, oppressed classes have won and can maintain certain civil liberties and democratic rights through stubborn struggling against the ruling class.

"Such democracy as the workers have won is partial and uncertain so long as capitalism survives. . . ."⁴

As Socialists understand it, Thomas has declared genuine democracy offers the greatest possibilities for the good life, possibilities which are certainly not realized under any system of dictatorship, its only existing alternative today.

"There is still a magnificent challenge in the democratic theory at its best; the theory that the good life is for all men, that there must be equality of opportunity, that the world in which we must live and work together should be managed as a fellowship in which free men have the voice of citizens rather than subjects. . . ."⁵

". . . while democracy is no mystic savior of a fallible race of men, it does express at best the noblest political ideal men have yet formed. Practically in its imperfect form there is no substitute for it which offers surer hope for men. In our Western world the chance of relatively peaceful progress lies not in contempt for democracy but in defining the scope of its operations and improving in its ideals and efficiency. . . ."⁶

Fascism.¹ Socialists are more or less in common agreement upon the general nature of fascism. They regard it as a bold, open attempt of the capitalist class to establish an out-and-out dictatorship. Capitalism tol-

⁴Socialist Handbook--1937, p. 19.

⁵Thomas, America's Way Out, p. 122.

⁶Ibid., p. 129.

¹Socialist Call, Draft for a Program for the Socialist Party of the United States, pp. 8-12; Socialist Perspectives--1937, p. 3. Laidler, Socializing Our Democracy, pp. 16-19. Laski, The State in Theory and Practice, pp. 111-118, 170-174, 218, 256. Thomas, Democracy versus Dictatorship, pp. 19-21.

erates the form of political democracy as long as its own economic hegemony remains unthreatened. Confronted by a severe economic crisis which stirs unrest in the working class and threatens a revolutionary solution of the issue, Big Business makes an alliance with the Middle Class and the Military to restore order out of chaos and to resolve the economic slump at the expense of the working class. Labor unions are suppressed, working-hours are increased, wages are cut; the slack of unemployment is taken up by forced labor; workers are sent to labor camps under national auspices. At no time does fascism menace private initiative, private enterprise or private profit, the fundamental features of capitalism.

"... Fascism is an expression of capitalist society in decay. It is an agency of the ruling financial oligarchy to preserve the existing economic system by new economic and political devices. For this purpose it mobilizes the most parasitic, unproductive and unreliable elements in society, makes lying, hypocritical, demagogic appeals to the middle class, and through the use of brutal force and terror endeavors to keep the working class in subjection. By its seeming fight against 'banking capital', by its promises of a new expansion and of a revival of retail trade ('breaking up the department stores'), by promising to end unemployment, and enrolling sections of the unemployed in its paid battalions, fascism is enabled to build up a mass movement based on the middle class, the youth, the declassed proletariat, and to win considerable support also among the workers.

"Fascism is open, direct, and the most brutal sort of dictatorship directed against the working class. It liquidates all labor organizations because it fears any expression of the class struggle through them. No sooner does it achieve power, than fascism throws off the mask of demagogy and betrays the very elements to whom it had appeared to cater before its rise to power. Thus, while in its formative period fascism bases its organization largely on the middle class, declassed elements and pauperized workers and peasants, it is an agency of finance-capital whose class representative it is, and on whose behalf it rules. Fascism comes to power because in the period of decaying capitalism, the capitalists see no other way of maintaining their profits except by lowering the standards of the working class and of the middle layers. This, however, reduces the internal market, reduces production, and therefore the volume of profits. Fascism therefore finally turns to foreign conquests as the remedy. Fascism is not the road to recovery and prosperity. It is the road to deeper exploitation, misery and barbarism. Fascism leads directly to war."²

The fascist appeal succeeds not by proclaiming its inherent attachment to the status quo, but by its proposal for revolutionary changes within the

²Socialist Call, Draft For a Program for the Socialist Party of the United States, pp. 8-9.

framework of capitalism, capable of solving the latter's economic dilemmas. Another contributory factor for its success is its espousal of nationalism; it makes a stirring appeal to the race and national consciousness of its potential followers by glorifying their traditions and culture. At the same time, fascists declare that all elements of foreign race-nationality are responsible for the economic and spiritual collapse of the nation; nothing short of their complete uprooting can remedy the situation.

"Fascism everywhere has only served to fasten capitalism upon the backs of the workers. But Fascism has done so by making a revolutionary anti-status-quo, anti-capitalist, plebian appeal in order to turn mass discontent out of Socialist channels, especially middle class discontent."³

The Socialist party's solution of the question is the waging of the relentless class struggle to destroy capitalism. Fascism has its roots in the capitalist system and only the united efforts of the working class in destroying capitalism can halt from the further inroads of fascism in the United States, France, Great Britain, and elsewhere. The basic issue confronting the working class, as the Socialist party sees it, is Socialism versus Capitalism. It denies that Democracy versus Fascism is a correct statement of the issue, rather holding that fascism springs from the inadequacies of nationalist-capitalist democracy.⁴

" . . . Fascism itself was the child of nationalism and capitalism which were the guiding principles of bourgeois democracy. There is no explanation of the triumph of fascism in Italy and Germany which does not compel us to admit that fact and to examine the reason for it. . . ."⁵

" . . . Fascism is the worst stage of capitalist-nationalism in our present world; it is, however, a stage. All the elements of Fascism are present in capitalist-nationalism. Fascism itself grew out of these elements. It was fertilized by the blood of the slain in the last war; warmed into

³ Socialist Call, Socialist Perspectives--1937, p. 3.

⁴ Thomas, Democracy versus Dictatorship, pp. 19-21. (The issue of Democracy versus Fascism is discussed in the presentation of the Socialist party's criticism of the Communist party, infra.)

⁵ Thomas, op. cit., p. 21.

maturity by the two hates precipitated by mis-called peace treaties. . . ."⁶

"Basically, there are two main lines of working class strategy in the struggle against Fascist reaction: the People's Front or the Class Struggle!"⁷

The policy of the class struggle which socialists advocate involves: organizing the working class to carry on a militant fight in industry, and imbuing them with socialist objectives; winning over large sections of the middle class by exposing the bankruptcy of capitalism and its alternative, fascism; undermining the mass basis of fascism by taking away from the fascist leaders their potential lower middle-class following.⁸

"Lastly, the 'democratic' capitalist politicians, if they are at all inclined to make concessions to the working class, will do so more readily while the working class leadership is in the opposition instead of being in its pocket. An aggressive program of forward action by a Socialist Party will sweep that large, formerly conservative, middle class basis from under the feet of the 'democratic' capitalist politicians. If these gentry would still have some standing with such one time rank and file they will have to take a few steps 'to the left' themselves.

"Such a program will: weaken reaction, strengthen the working class, deprive Fascism of a mass basis, and give the working class new allies."⁹

War Position

In its analysis of the causes of war, the Socialist party has affirmed Marxian first principles: wars are perennial under capitalism; they arise out of the conflicting claims and interests of rival capitalist and imperialist states. Successful capitalism demands easy access to raw materials, and world markets for accumulated surpluses. This results in a mad scramble for colonial possessions which can serve both purposes. Rival imperialist claims lead to the growth of armaments and make large armies and navies necessary to protect territorial claims and commerce. When the opposing contentions of

⁶Thomas, War As a Socialist Sees It, p. 16.

⁷Socialist Call, Socialist Perspectives--1937, p. 3.

⁸Idem.

⁹Idem.

the rival imperialist states cannot be resolved peacefully, the issue is settled by force of arms. Thus does capitalism foster nationalism, imperialism and militarism, which make war inevitable.¹

The fight against war, therefore, argues the Socialist party, is primarily a fight against capitalism, for as long as the profit system remains there can be no lasting peace.² Any program for peace which ignores the economic roots of war must therefore be ineffective.

"To separate the struggle against war from the general fight against capitalist society is to deprive the labor movement of one of its most potent anti-capitalist weapons. War is the crowning crime of capitalism. More than any other feature of capitalist society war exposes the inherent rottenness of the entire system. If the inter-relation between capitalism and war can once be brought home to the workers, the struggle against capitalism will be considerably broadened since the masses are essentially opposed to war. The masses must be made to see that only the socialists are consistent opponents of war; that the socialist claim that war is an outcome of capitalist rivalries is constantly justified by the outbreak of new wars; that capitalist 'peace' plans are only covers for new war preparations. War and capitalism can be defeated only if the specific activities against war, while not consisting of abstract socialist propaganda, are based on a consistent Marxian analysis of war and are carried on in the spirit of an uncompromising struggle for a socialist society."³

St. Louis Declaration, 1917.⁴ The basis of the Socialist party's war position was laid down at its National Convention held in St. Louis on April 7, 1917 (following the government's war declaration). Unlike the majority of the European Social Democratic parties, the American Socialist party flatly rejected the 'war-to-make-the-world-safe-for-democracy' orientation and called it a shameful venture in American imperialism from which the American workers had little to gain. It declared:

"We brand the declaration of war by our government as a crime against the people of the United States and against the nations of the world.

"In all modern history there has been no war more unjustifiable than

¹Thomas, War As a Socialist Sees It, pp. 9-10; Why I Am a Socialist, pp. 8-9. Socialist Call, April 30, 1938, pp. 8-9.

²Socialist Party, U.S.A., "Resolution on War," American Socialist Monthly, (July 1936), Vol. V, No. 5, p. 15.

³Zam, "War Policies, Sanctions, and Socialism", American Socialist Monthly, (May 1936), Vol. V, No. 3, p. 21.

⁴Hillquit, Loose Leaves From A Busy Life, pp. 165-169.

the war in which we are about to engage.

"No greater dishonor has ever been forced upon a people than that which the capitalist class is forcing upon this nation against its will."¹

The Party adopted a seven-plank program designed to implement its position, for which many of its members, notably Eugene V. Debs, went to Federal prison for ten years and the party's N.E.C. for twenty years: (1) Continuous, active opposition to war by demonstrations, petitions, etc. (2) Opposition to compulsory military service in the army or navy. (3) Resistance to all forms of censorship of press, mails, speech, assemblage. (4) Attack upon militarism and military training in the schools. (5) Organization of workers politically and economically to resist war. (6) Distribution of anti-war propaganda to teach the true causes of war. (7) Socialization and democratic management of all natural resources, land, and great industries to eliminate the profits of war.²

Detroit Declaration of Principles, 1934. In 1934, the Socialist party, at its National Convention at Detroit, adopted a resolution on war which was instrumental in leading to the Old Guard split some two years later. In essence, it held that Socialists must oppose all capitalist wars and be prepared by "mass war resistance" to make any war crisis an opportunity for inaugurating a Socialist society. Many Militant Socialists regarded this war resolution as an expression of Lenin's slogan of turning an imperialist war into a civil war to bring on socialism.

The pertinent section of the war resolution, which marked a further leftward step of the party, read as follows:

" . . . War cannot be tolerated by Socialists, or preparedness for war They will loyally support, in the tragic event of war, any of their comrades who for anti-war activities or refusal to perform war service, come into conflict with public opinion or the law. Moreover, recognizing the suicidal nature of modern combat and the incalculable train of wars'

¹ Socialist Call, April 2, 1933, p. 6.

² Idem.

consequences which rest most heavily upon the working class, they will refuse collectively to sanction or support any international war; they will, on the contrary, by agitation and opposition do their best not to be broken up by the war, but to break up the war. They will meet war and the detailed plans for war already mapped out by the war-making arms of the government, by massed war resistance, organized so far as practicable in a general strike of labor unions and professional groups in a united effort to make the waging of war a practical impossibility and to convert the capitalist war crisis into a victory for Socialism."³

At the Convention, the Declaration of Principles was carried by a vote of 99 to 47. A party referendum subsequently affirmed the decision by a vote of 10,822 to 6,512.⁴

This basic position was again affirmed by the party at Cleveland Convention of 1936 when it declared:

" . . . As in 1917, American socialists will refuse to support any war the capitalist government of America might undertake. Should war break out despite our efforts, we will continue to carry on the class struggle and fight against war, and through mass resistance to it, through agitation for a general strike, will endeavor to convert the imperialist war into an organized mass struggle for the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of a farmers' and workers' government. . . ."⁵

"In the light of the experience of the last war, where many working class movements were tricked into support of imperialist war under the guise of a holy crusade, the Socialist Party of the U.S.A. proclaims that no capitalist war can be a good war, that no capitalist device can be a basis for a policy of peace. Only when the workers take political power into their own hands in the great nations of the earth will the world have a sound basis for lasting peace."⁶

"The first enemy of the working class is its own capitalist class. And when the working class forgets this it inevitably finds itself in the service of its own ruling class digging bayonets into the warm bodies of fellow slaves of another country.

"A working class party, by supporting a war, will be compelled to declare a moratorium on the class struggle. It will have to call for civil peace. .

" . . . And it will find itself in the camp of the capitalists, talking against and breaking strikes, just at the time when it should be leading the masses into revolutionary battle. For it is in times of war that great economic crises sweep the land, that the masses turn against their old polit-

³National Convention of the Socialist Party, "Declaration of Principles," American Socialist Monthly (July 1934), Vol. III, Special Supplement, pp.5-6.

⁴Ibid., p. 2.

⁵"Resolution on War," American Socialist Monthly (July 1936), Vol. V, No. 5, p. 16.

⁶Idem.

ical leaders who are driving the people to suicide and fratricide, that the workers are armed, the situation cries aloud for trained revolutionary leadership.

"The party that will take the leadership will be one that has opposed the war from its beginning and has thus disclaimed all responsibility for the war, that has supported and led strike movements, that has never forgotten that it can only live while it unceasingly champions the historical interests of the working class in an equally unceasing class struggle."⁷

Although Socialists are opposed to imperialist wars, the overwhelming majority do not regard themselves as pacifists.⁸ There are wars to which they would give their unqualified support and endorsement:

"Socialists believe in the right of colonies to be free. In the fight for such freedom the colonial people may have to resort to armed struggle. And such armed struggle the Socialists would support. Such colonial revolutionary wars, by striking a blow at the economic basis of imperialism, are allies of the revolutionary struggle of the workers within the imperialist nation.

"In some countries the working class will win power while in other countries capitalism will continue to exist. Socialists believe that working-class governments should arm themselves against capitalist attack.

"Such wars, as mentioned, are wars for freedom, for Socialist ideals. And hence we support them."⁹

Opposition to Collective Security Pacts. The Socialist party has opposed Collective Security as a road to peace.¹ Norman Thomas has flatly declared, "Collective Security Means Collective Suicide."² (1) It rejects the basic assumption underlying this position, namely, that a sound distinction can be drawn between the so-called "Fascist aggressors" and the "Democratic non-aggressors". (2) It holds that collective security pacts must either be ineffective or must lead to war. (3) It contends that a democratic war to defeat Asiatic or European fascism will only lead to fascism in the United States. (4) It denies that collective security pacts will save the Soviet Union.

⁷Tyler, Youth Fights War, pp. 14-15.

⁸Socialist Handbook--1937, p. 25.

⁹Tyler, op. cit., p. 8.

¹Socialist Call, Nov. 27, 1937, p. 4.

²Ibid., June 11, 1938, p. 3.

Fascist-Aggressors versus Democratic-Non-Aggressors? Socialists are adamant in their contention that no such separation as Democratic and Fascist powers is possible in evaluating the war-mongers. At heart, both systems subscribe to the profit system, both practice exploitation, and both favor imperialism.³

The Socialist party does not deny that Germany, Japan and Italy are "aggressor nations", and that Spain, Ethiopia, and China, for example, are victims. But it adds that Great Britain, France and the United States are also "aggressor nations", and that India, Africa, Syria, Latin America and the Philippines are likewise victims. The chief difference seems to be, the Socialist party has argued, that the terror and bloodshed attending conquest by the Fascist Powers are more shockingly visible to the world today, whereas the conquests of Great Britain in India, France in Morocco and Algeria, and the United States in Latin America are accomplished facts, accepted as such. But these latter countries have also left a bloody trail in their wake. Today they exploit and enjoy the results of their conquests quietly after having effectively squelched active opposition.⁴

The imperialism of fascist Germany, Italy and Japan differs little in principle from that of the capitalist democracies. To the extent that their imperialist interests remain unmolested, the "democracies" are not at all concerned with what the fascist powers do in Spain, China or elsewhere. Basically, argues the S.P., the powers-that-be in the "aggressor" and "non-aggressor" nations have common ends: to exploit colonial possessions, to extend economic control over their victims, to advance the interests of their merchants, bankers and traders.

³Tyler, "Collective Security With Imperialists Doesn't Aid Labor," Socialist Call, May 14, 1938, p. 5.

⁴Tyler, "French Imperialism an Oppressor of Colonial Peoples," Socialist Call, Jan. 22, 1938, p. 5. Al Hamilton, "Collective Security' and the Fight for Colonial Freedom," Socialist Call, Sept. 3, 1938, p. 3. Zam, op. cit., pp. 18-19.

" . . . fascism alone is not at the bottom of war, and the world struggle among capitalist nations is only superficially a conflict between democratic and fascist powers. Imperialism, not merely fascism, is at the root of war and imperialism springs from capitalism, whether of the democratic or the fascist form. Not only the fascist countries, but the capitalist democracies also, oppress colonial peoples and despoil them of their wealth; not only the fascist countries, but the capitalist democracies also, maintain their economic privileges by force of arms. In the vanquishment of imperialism everywhere, and not solely in the vanquishment of fascism in one or several countries, lies the eventual hope of a warless world."⁵

"The 'democratic' nations, far from placing obstacles in the path of the fascist war-mongers, have, if their own imperialist interests demand it, even made that path easier. The final line-up in a war may not be the one present developments seem to indicate, but these developments do show that the alignments will not be based on the internal political system, but on the inter-relationship of imperialist interests. The next war, like the last, will be a war of conquest, an imperialist war for the re-division of the world among the rival imperialist powers. Any illusions^{that} on one side this will be a war for 'democracy' (shades of Woodrow Wilson!) for the defense of the small nations (notice how the slogans of 1914 repeat themselves) only means that the working class will be drawn into such a war on the side of the imperialist alliances."⁶

Collective Security Ineffective or Leads to War. Even if one were disposed to forget the past, Socialists have denied that the capitalist democracies banded together in collective security pacts can preserve the status quo, keep the fascist aggressors "quarantined", and prevent further aggression on their part by a mere show of strength. Socialists argue that it is common knowledge that fascism is economically unsound. A fascist system cannot resolve its dilemmas merely by super-capitalism and anti-labor policies at home. The fascist dictators well know that nothing but a bold imperialist program -- seizure of more territory for economic exploitation -- can keep them going. They cannot afford to be intimidated by collective security pacts; they would prefer to go down fighting rather than be slowly strangled by economic pressure. Consequently, to make this quarantine effective,

⁵ Socialist Call, April 30, 1938, p. 8.

⁶ Zam, op. cit., p. 19.

the "democracies" must resort to positive action, not merely to threats.

And positive action can have only one consequence: War.

The proponents of collective security argue, of course, that no resort to war is intended to make their quarantine effective and that they advocate governmental economic sanctions to stop the aggressors. They say that if Japan, Italy and Germany are judicially declared the "aggressors" by the "democratic" nations, the latter will refuse to sell oil, coal, cotton and other products needed to carry on industry and military enterprise. Socialists deny that such measures will stop the fascist dictators whose actions in Ethiopia, Spain and China amply prove, at least to Socialists, that they would strike boldly if thwarted. Hong-Kong, Singapore, Hawaii, the Philippine Islands, the Dutch East Indies are within striking distance of Japan who would not hesitate to attack if vital necessities were officially denied her by the United States, Great Britain and allied countries. In short, any attempt to impose effective economic sanctions must invariably precipitate a situation in which the proponents of collective security must yield or resort to the use of armed force.¹

Socialists have also held that there is little one can expect of the "non-aggressor democracies" where self-interest is not involved. They will "quarantine the aggressor nations" only if the vital interests of their own imperialist ventures are threatened. Otherwise they will not take any steps likely to involve them in war.

"Collective security is just another name for a military alliance. When the working class of any country supports its regime in a policy of collective security, it is virtually stating to its imperialist government that it gives it a blank check for declaring war, at any time its regime, together with other of the ilk, decide that somebody is violating collective security rules. When the working class signs a collective security pact, it is writing a blank check, which the government will date, which the profiteers will

¹ Alfred Baker Lewis, "Socialists and Sanctions," Socialist Call, Feb. 1, 1936, p. 10.

draft, and for which the masses must pay."²

The Socialist party has favored and supported workers' sanctions, as opposed to the economic sanctions officially imposed by the capitalist governments, such as refusal to transport shipment of munitions, oil, guncotton and other war supplies to fascist states.³ Workers' sanctions do not commit workers to the support of the policies of their capitalist governments; endorsing governmentally-imposed sanctions does.

War Means Fascism in the United States. If the United States is party to a collective security pact with Great Britain, France and the Soviet Union, the prospects of being drawn into a war against Germany over South America, and Japan over China are very great, Socialists contend. They do not think such a war will benefit the people of the United States. The vast majority of American workers have no stake in South America or the Far East. But American imperialists have a great stake in both places which they want defended. They will not oppose any such war. It will be the old game of 1917: an imperialist war for trade, markets and territory.⁴

The ruthless suppression of all opposition to militarism in 1917 is a sad example of what will come with the next war, Socialists have pointed out, only the persecution will be intensified by what experience has taught. Already provisions have been made by the United States War Department, as embodied in the Sheppard-Hill Bill, to inaugurate a plan calling for: universal conscription of men, women and children; the abolition of all labor unions; the outlawing of strikes; the regulation of industry under the direction of its present owners, the big industrialists; the imposition of strict censorship. In time of a "national crisis" such a plan will sweep the coun-

²Socialist Call, Socialist Perspectives--1937, p. 4.

³Browder and Thomas, op. cit., p. 36. Thomas, "Collective Security and Socialism," Socialist Review (May-June, 1938), Vol. VI, No. 6, p. 15.

⁴Socialist Call, Socialist Perspectives--1937, p. 4.

try and gain wide support on the pretense that stern measures are necessary to win the war. Opposition will not be brooked. This means that the moment the United States enters a war to fight fascism in Europe or the Far East, any liberty and democracy which still prevail at home will die, and dictatorship will supplant them. What is this, ask Socialists, but the inauguration of fascism? And once fascism has gained a foothold, it will not easily be shaken off!⁵

Collective Security and the Soviet Union. The Socialist party has taken the attitude of critical support towards the Soviet Union. But it does not believe that endorsement of collective security can give any genuine aid to the Soviet Union; on the contrary, it believes that such a measure will do irreparable injury.

Norman Thomas had pointed out that the espousal of collective security by the Soviet Union stems from the mistaken policies of Stalin in raising the issue of Democracy versus Fascism and its corollary, the Popular Front, in order to retain alliances with France and Great Britain.¹ Socialists do not believe that the capitalist democracies will rush to the aid of the Soviet Union unless it is to their economic advantage to do so. They argue that when it is more expedient, the democracies will promptly go over to the side of the Fascist powers.² As a matter of fact, this is how they interpret the Munich Pact (1938) in which Great Britain and France, completely ignoring the Soviet Union, came to terms with Hitler and Mussolini, permitting the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia.

And so, Socialists have argued, while the Soviet Union pursues the will-

⁵Idem. Tyler, "War Preparation Is Forerunner For Dictatorship," Socialist Call, Feb. 5, 1938, p. 5. Thomas, War As a Socialist Sees It, p. 19.

¹Thomas, Democracy versus Dictatorship, p. 20.

²Zam, op. cit., pp. 18-21.

of the wisp of wooing the capitalist democracies, it advocates policies which disarm and demoralize the international working class, which, in a crisis, will prove to be the only friend the Soviet Union can count upon.³ A return to fundamental policies of building revolutionary movements in the great capitalist democracies not saddled to class collaboration policies is the most effective defense possible of the Soviet Union.⁴

"As a workers' state, the Soviet Union has no colonies or imperialist aims. In this, as in its offer of mutual disarmament to the other nations, it has shown how a working-class government can be a force for peace. Yet within the ranks of the workers, in the name of 'defending democracy', 'defense of small countries', 'defense of colonial peoples', and 'defense of the Soviet Union', all worthy slogans when their implications are not fully examined -- the Communist party is operating among Socialist and class conscious elements in a way which demoralizes the struggle against war. With the war so close, Socialists are compelled to criticize this policy and point out its dangers to the working class."⁵

"The Socialist party calls upon the working class to come to the support of the Soviet Union. This can be done only by refusing support to any war of any capitalist country, by undermining the war machine, by incessantly preparing the working class, by uninterrupted class struggle to overthrow the rule of capitalism. Direct support should be given the Soviet Union by opposing any blockade against it, by striking against all shipments of supplies to the enemies of the Soviet Union, and by direct aid in the form of men, money and munitions to the U.S.S.R.

"The Socialist Party of the United States pledges its aid to the workers of the world in every struggle against their rulers and to colonial peoples in the fight against imperialist domination."⁶

"The Soviet Union, where capitalism has been abolished, is really desirous of peace. The Soviet Union, surrounded by capitalist enemies, is in constant danger of imperialist attack, and all class conscious workers must be prepared to defend the Soviet Union against imperialist attacks. Such defense, however, can only be a proletarian defense, independent of capitalist governments and their policies and independent of the diplomacy of the Soviet Union, and carried out with the instrumentality of organized labor. Should the American government, or any other capitalist government, for reasons of its own enter into an alliance with the Soviet Union, defense of the Soviet Union does not include support for capitalist allies of the Soviet Union in war. The Soviet Union can best be defended by vigorously

³ Socialist Handbook--1937, pp. 24-25.

⁴ Tyler, Youth Fights War p. 18.

⁵ Socialist Handbook--1937, pp. 24-25.

⁶ Ibid., pp. 25-26.

carrying on the class war in all countries."⁷

League of Nations. The Socialist party has scorned such agencies as the League of Nations and such agreements as the Kellogg Peace Pact¹ as solutions to the war question. The former was set up after the Treaty of Versailles by the victors to help keep the vanquished in subjection. Its fundamental thesis has been to obtain peace by the preservation of the status-quo, a patently impossible solution of the war problem.²

Norman Thomas has described the League of Nations as "... a league of fairly well satisfied states to enforce the peace of a status quo against the dissatisfied nations in the House of Have Not. . . ."³

"... The League has ignored or bungled every major issue. It never dreamed of acting against British or French imperialism; it gave no protection to the Riffs against France nor did it protest against British bombing of tribes on the northwest frontier. Japan successfully snapped her fingers at the League and took Manchuria. Germany walked out of the League and temporarily settled the question of armaments, with which the League had vainly wrested, by rearming. Never did the League find it possible to correct major injustices in the peace treaties or, what would have been more important, break down any economic barriers or make any sort of allocation of raw materials, thereby lessening the case for conquest in the mind of the nations shut in the House of Have Not. . . ."⁴

"The League of Nations has displayed itself as the conference table of the capitalist powers, over which they make their deals for the maintenance of the imperialist system. It has proved itself as powerless to prevent war as is the capitalist system itself."⁵

Program of Action. Socialists have therefore concluded that only a program of militant class struggle against capitalism, in which the masses

⁷"Resolution on War," American Socialist Monthly (July 1936), Vol. V, No. 5, p. 16.

¹Zam, op. cit., p. 20.

²Thomas, War As a Socialist Sees It, pp. 14, 16-17. Lewis, op. cit., p. 10.

³Thomas, op. cit., p. 16.

⁴Ibid., pp. 15-16.

⁵Socialist Handbook--1937, p. 22.

move forward towards socialism, can eliminate war and halt Fascism; that any other road, however plausible and attractive, ultimately leads to conciliation, compromise, support of capitalist wars on one pretext or another, and then defeat and collapse of the working class movement.

" . . . The struggle against war is therefore bound up with the struggle against capitalism and for Socialism. This struggle cannot be conducted unless there is a working class party, clear in policy, consistent and vigorous in action, which never compromises the class struggle, and through all trials leads the working class to the final goal."¹

At a National Convention held in Kenosha, Wisconsin, in April, 1938, a fourteen point program of militant class action for keeping the United States out of war was adopted, with these provisions: (1) Withdrawal of American ships and marines from Chinese territory; (2) A "people's boycott" of Japanese goods and a refusal to sell war materials to Japan. (3) Lifting of the embargo against Spain and support of the Loyalist government in the Spanish civil war. (4) A program of disarmament and opposition to a large army and navy. (5) Opposition to the Sheppard-Hill bill for industrial mobilization. (6) Abolition of military training in high schools and the elimination of military supervision from the C.C.C. (7) An amendment to the constitution providing for a referendum on the question of war (Ludlow Resolution). (8) "The abandonment by the United States of all imperialist ventures, whether of an economic, financial or military nature, in Latin America." (9) Independence for all colonial possessions. (10) Opposition to alliances and collective security pacts. (11) Preservation and extension of the democratic rights and civil liberties of the masses. (12) The organization, politically and economically, of the workers and farmers on a program which leads to peace. (13) Opposition to all wars, declared and undeclared, and the use of whatever effective measures possible, including the general strike, for the abolition of capitalism and war. (14) "The refusal of support to all

¹ Idem.

wars conducted by capitalist governments."²

The Socialist party is affiliated to the Keep America Out of War Committee, an organization composed of federated groups of political parties, labor unions, cooperatives, youth organizations, women's clubs and churches. In its main features, its program is in accord with that of the Socialist party. The basic plank is opposition to sanctions and collective security pacts as a road to peace. (This organization was formed, among other reasons, to oppose the policies of the League for Peace and Democracy, whose support of collective security was declared to be a pro-war program.)³

International Relations: The Soviet Union

The Socialist party has endorsed the principles and achievements of the Russian revolution. It has taken the attitude that the Soviet Union deserves the support of the working class because it is the only workers' state whose fundamental orientation is of a socialist nature, and whose system of economy has made such advances towards a socialist society.¹ It does not believe, however, that its support must of necessity blind it to what it considers to be the obvious and serious defects found in the Soviet regime.

"The Socialist Party recognizes the Soviet Union as the first workers country in which the basis for a Socialist society is being built. It will therefore defend the Soviet Union against all capitalist attacks. It will follow the development in the Soviet Union in order to profit by the experiences gained in the building of Socialism and will utilize its achievements in its work of educating the American workers to Socialism.

"The Socialist Party does not believe in the infallibility of the policies or leadership of the Soviet Union. It therefore reserves the right to criticize, in a fraternal manner, those policies which it believes to be harmful. . . ."²

² Socialist Call, April 30, 1938, p. 9. For earlier programs, see: Thomas, War As a Socialist Sees It, pp. 10-14, 24-25. Socialist Handbook--1937, p. 26. Socialist Call, Jan. 15, 1938, p. 1.

³ Socialist Call, Feb. 5, 1938, p. 12; April 9, 1938, p. 1; June 4, 1938, p. 1.

¹ Socialist Call, Draft For a Program for the Socialist Party of the United States, pp. 26-27. Thomas, Why I Am a Socialist, p. 12.

² Socialist Call, op. cit., pp. 26-27.

" . . . The U.S.S.R. deserves support as the enemy of fascism, notably the German-Italian Japanese alliance, in international politics, but not an uncritical support which condones the crimes of the totalitarian state if the shibboleths are Marxist-or better Stalinist."³

The Socialist party's objections to the policies of the Soviet Union may be placed in these general categories: (1) Stalin's foreign policy of compromising the class struggle to gain allies for the Soviet Union; (2) the abuses of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, which has become a dictatorship over the proletariat; (3) the complete absence of civil rights and liberties for the Russian people; (4) the growth of economic inequalities; (5) the unwarranted execution of the Old Bolshevik leaders, following a series of Moscow Trials.

Soviet Foreign Policy. The Socialist party has accused the Soviet Union of making the international working class movement subservient to its own supposed needs. In his effort to save the Soviet Union (by policies, incidentally, which Socialists think will not save it, but will accelerate its isolation and make for its defeat), Stalin has invented the issue of Democracy versus Fascism,¹ which has led to a weakening of the militant class struggle policies of the Communist International and the Communist parties throughout the world, lest the great "democracies", the potential allies of the Soviet Union, be offended. The consequence has been the introduction of treacherous working class policies, such as the defense of "democracy", the building of the People's Front,² and the reliance upon the League of Nations³ and collective security pacts as the best method of maintaining peace.⁴

³Norman Thomas, Common Sense (Dec. 1937), Vol. VI, No. 12, p. 24.

¹Thomas, Democracy versus Dictatorship, pp. 19-21.

²The problem of the People's Front is treated in greater detail in the criticism of the C.I. and the C.P., U.S.A. by the Socialist party, infra.

³Thomas and Browder, Debate: Which Road for American Workers, Socialist or Communist? pp. 14, 34.

⁴The S.P.'s opposition to collective security has already been discussed, supra.

" . . . The communist espousal of 'democracy versus fascism' and the aggressive communist effort to hold back social revolution in Spain in favor of 'democracy' -- are derived almost solely from Stalin's eagerness to make Russia secure by winning for her mighty allies against the attack which she considers inevitable."⁵

In his debate with Earl Browder, Norman Thomas condemned the Soviet foreign policy of negotiating such capitalist alliances as the Franco-Soviet pact:

"I know the dangers that beset Communist Russia, and I know why Stalin has to take advantage of capitalist imperialist strife between nations. But when the Soviet Republic made a military pact with that dishonest broker, Laval of France, something happened which seriously compromised the old Communist Position. Worse followed. Stalin gave out a statement which says: 'M. Stalin understands and fully approves the national defense policy of France in keeping her armed forces on a level required for security.' In other words, we have an endorsement of an army which in bourgeois France is still a probable source of Fascist trouble, an endorsement of an army under a Premier who even now is probably double-crossing Russia! . . ."⁶

Another aspect of Soviet foreign policy which Socialists have found incomprehensible was the sale of oil by Soviet Russia to Mussolini during the Ethiopian crisis, when threat of a general boycott of Italy was made to stop the latter's acts of aggression against Ethiopia.⁷

Dictatorship of the Proletariat. Socialists have alleged that the dictatorship of the proletariat, as understood by Lenin, was the equivalent of a workers' democracy; that under Stalin, the dictatorship of a party has supplanted that of the workers generally.¹

" . . . What we have in Russia at present is not a dictatorship of the proletariat, but a dictatorship over the proletariat, not even a dictatorship of the communists over the proletariat but rather a dictatorship of a bureaucratic clique over the communist party as well as over every one else. Is this the ideal of a proletarian dictatorship? Decidedly not. . ."²

⁵Thomas, Democracy versus Dictatorship, pp. 19-21.

⁶Thomas and Browder, op. cit., p. 15.

⁷Thomas, War As a Socialist Sees It, p. 18.

¹Kantorovitch, Problems of Revolutionary Socialism, pp. 28-29; Towards Socialist Reorientation, p. 19.

²Kantorovitch, Towards Socialist Reorientation, p. 19.

One of the fundamental difficulties, Socialists have charged, is the structure of the entire Communist movement. It is monolithic in its nature, and permits no differences, however slight, from the established party position.

" . . . Monolithism is the special contribution of Stalin to the Communist misfortunes. . . ."³

In reviewing Earl Browder's book, "What is Communism?" Thomas said:

"Finally, it will be observed that the author confuses the dictatorship of one party with the dictatorship of the proletariat and the latter with the workers' democracy. He does not successfully deny that Russian control has dominated world communism, even to the new line which Browder himself suddenly announced to his docile followers. And while supporting civil liberty in America he is silent on Communist theory and practice in Russia, which admits no right of civil liberty to the individual. Consider the Kirov case and its aftermath!"⁴

Norman Thomas has thus characterized Stalin:

" . . . He is a glorified Tammany boss, Asiatic rather than Western in important respects, with a power to bring recalcitrants to terms that no American boss ever dreamed of. . . ."⁵

Curtailement of Civil Rights and Liberties. Although the Socialist party has never underestimated the economic advances made by the Soviet Union, it has denied the existence of genuine liberty and democracy; it has deplored the absence of free speech and free press. It has held that the dictatorship of the proletariat has become a dictatorship over the proletariat, with all the power wielded by Stalin and his clique of loyal henchmen. Such policies, the S.P. has declared, defeat one of the most significant purposes for desiring a new social order, the emancipation of the human spirit.¹ Even though civil liberties of one kind and another are recognized as basic and

³ Kantorovitch, Problems of Revolutionary Socialism, p. 6.

⁴ Thomas, "The Communists' New Line," New Republic, (May 6, 1936), Vol. LXXXVI, No. 1118, p. 374.

⁵ Thomas, America's Way Out, p. 86.

¹ Laidler, Socializing Our Democracy, p. 101. Thomas, op. cit., p. 76. Socialist Call, Dec. 7, 1935, p. 12; June 5, 1937, p. 3.

guaranteed to all under the new Constitution, in practice this has not proved to be so; further, all genuine opposition is ruled out because the legality of the Communist party alone is recognized.²

" . . . The most disquieting act about Russia is that there is so little sign that the dictatorship is withering away. That dictatorship still imposes a rigid regimentation and at times prostitutes justice to terrorism. When Kirov was assassinated by a former Communist it was a terrible crime. But when the Russian government thereupon put to death more than a hundred persons on its blacklist and increased the bitterness of imprisonment or surveillance for unknown hundreds it was a greater crime. It was a crime not excused by the exigencies of a revolutionary crisis. It was a crime directly derived from the Communist theory that justice is to be understood only in terms of the safety of that abstraction, the 'working masses', which safety is infallibly interpreted by the dictatorship of the one party in power. In this sort of justice lies neither security nor liberty for the new society. They are to be found only in realizing true democracy. This must be more than nose counting if it is to have power or value. Those who really desire to maintain democracy will prove it by their understanding of civil liberty. This fact organized Socialism has accepted to a degree that Communism has not. Loyalty to the idea of justice and civil liberty for the individual may sometimes prove difficult in the hour of struggle. It is the only loyalty which can prevent the gradual degeneration of men under the new society to the level of a community of more or less well fed and well tended cows."³

"Let us recite the inescapable facts which make the Russian claims of democracy a fantastic misuse of words.

"Every Russian citizen is kept track of by the most rigorous system of internal passports in the world. He may belong to a church but it is rigorously supervised and denied many rights which historically churches have claimed. If he is a worker he must belong to his union which in important ways serves his interests but is nevertheless far more completely subordinated to the state apparatus than the health of a socialist society requires. There is no right to strike under any circumstances. Aside from his union, the excellent workers' club of his factory and some admirable scientific societies, there is no club or association^{to} which a Russian may belong. No political party is legal except the communist. More and more the Communist Party is bureaucratically controlled. The Politburo, headed by Stalin, controls the party today, and the party absolutely controls the army and the government. So great is the fear of offending the dominant hierarchy or making a wrong guess as to its decisions that wise men, even in the Communist Party, seek to evade political responsibility. When I was in Moscow I was told of a communist unit in a very important factory where out of three thousand worker-members not a single one would stand as representative of that unit on a communist central com-

² Thomas, Democracy versus Dictatorship, pp. 14-16.

³ Thomas, Why I Am a Socialist, p. 11.

mittee. They chose small bureaucrats to represent them who had formerly worked in the factory. The old keenness of political discussion in the party had almost died, at least in so far as policy is concerned. (Criticism of administration is still allowed.) A quotation from Stalin is a final answer to all arguments. He receives the same sort of exaggerated veneration in public appearances, in the display of his picture, and in written references to him that is accorded to a Mussolini or a Hitler.

"Schools, the radio, the press are absolutely controlled by the government. The Communist Party, to be sure, has its own press distinct from government press, and it is significant that Pravda is more powerful than Izvestia, the government organ. The newspapers are compelled to agree on every important issue."⁴

Socialists have gone even further in their indictment of the non-economic aspects of the Soviet Union. They contend that communism and fascism have many significant features in common, despite the existence of important distinctions too.⁵ Basically both rest upon a one-party rule which has swept the horizon clear of all opposition, formidable or otherwise.

". . . The type of dictatorship which both communism and fascism accept rests upon the exclusive right of one party to political power and even to existence. Both dictatorships, because they are dictatorial, practise in its most extreme form the doctrine that the end justifies the means -- however cruel those means may be. The end, in cold fact, is the preservation of their own power. Both types of dictatorship are under the same compulsion to popularize their rule and both do it in the name of the mass which is everything while the individual is nothing. . . ."⁶

Growth of Economic Inequalities. The lack of democracy has endangered even the economic gains made by the Soviet Union, Socialists have charged. Movements like Stakhanovism have given rise to new economic divisions within the Soviet Union which threaten to create and perpetuate new economic classes.

After touring Soviet Russia, Norman Thomas made a summary report to his party members, declaring, in part:

"What gives me pause is the strong feeling I had that Russia was not moving towards a classless society, but on the contrary, perpetuating and even strengthening, new class divisions.

"A stakhanovite may possibly make as much as two thousand rubles a

⁴Thomas, Democracy versus Dictatorship, pp. 14-15.

⁵Ibid., pp. 10-12.

⁶Ibid., p. 11.

month; an unskilled worker in the same factory may make one hundred or one hundred fifty rubles, and some maids in private employment get as little as forty or fifty rubles. . . Don't let anyone tell you that there is no feeling of class distinction between the poorer paid workers and the high officials or even the Stakhanovites!"⁷

The Moscow Trials.¹ The Socialist Party has taken the position that, without espousing Trotskyism or the analysis of the trials of 1936-1938 as presented by his followers, in their essential features, the trials were frame-ups.² In the light of what is known about the leading figures of the trials, the judgment of the S.P. is that the charges were not sustained by the evidence presented.³ Everything else aside, Socialists inclined to the view that these severe measures were taken by Stalin to crush completely all vestiges of opposition to his one-man rule.

The Socialist Call has indicated a number of general but glaring weaknesses in the trials: the defendants were among the original leaders of the Russian revolution; only those who "confessed" were brought to trial; nothing in the writings of the accused points to assassination, terrorism or collaboration with Fascists and Nazis as their solution of the Russian question.⁴

"One of two conclusions has to be drawn from the gruesome events in Russia. Either that the original founders of the first working class state were and are scoundrels, or that Stalin's political machine is guilty of unpardonable crimes.

"Either conclusion reflects terribly upon the integrity of the world Marxist movement and threatens to wipe out Socialist influence for years to come.

"It becomes increasingly evident that the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, which for the most part remained a totalitarian set-up with well intentioned objectives, has produced a frankenstein. The monster hasn't weakened in recent months. In all likelihood it will not be subdued until

⁷ Socialist Call, June 5, 1937, p. 3.

¹ See: Heisler, The First Two Moscow Trials--Why? Adler, The Witchcraft Trial in Moscow. (Official Socialist party publications)

² Socialist Call, January 2, 1937, p. 10; June 19, 1937, p. 8; March 12, 1938, pp. 1, 3, 5.

³ Socialist Call, March 12, 1938, p. 3.

⁴ Idem.

it destroys its maker and most vigorous proponent -- Joseph Stalin."⁵

Spain¹

The position which the Socialist party took on Spain's civil war can be summed up in few words: support of the program of the deposed Spanish Socialist Premier, Largo Caballero. The latter's program involved four major propositions: (1) Aid to Spain by the working class of other countries. (2) Anti-fascist unity of all revolutionary working class parties and trade union organizations in Spain. (3) No persecution of any anti-fascist working class groups for differences arising from differing political orientations. (4) The unrelenting struggle for the defeat of fascism by the fight for the establishment of a Socialist regime in Spain.

Aid to Spain. The Socialist party opposed any intervention on the part of the United States government in the Spanish question. It advocated, however, working class aid in the form of shipment of food, clothing, medical supplies, and military aid by the individual enlistment of class-conscious workers in the Debs Column of the International Brigade.² It fought to have the embargo on munitions imposed by the United States government lifted to enable Loyalist Spain to purchase directly from the United States what the Rebels were able to receive by shipments from Germany and Italy.³

The Socialist party was also affiliated to the North American Committee to Aid the Spanish Democracy, an organization devoted to the raising of funds for non-military purposes.⁴

⁵Idem.

¹Caballero, "For Revolutionary Unity in Spain," Socialist Review (Jan-Feb., 1938), Vol. VI, No. 4, pp. 7-8, 18. Socialist Handbook--1937, pp. 32-36.

²Socialist Handbook--1937, pp. 33-34.

³Socialist Call, April 23, 1938, p. 1; June 11, 1938, p. 1.

⁴Socialist Handbook--1937, p. 36.

Anti-Fascist Unity.⁵ The Socialists believed that the war against Franco could have been won by a unity of anti-fascist political parties and trade unions with a revolutionary working-class program, unity being accomplished by giving representation to all working class groups in the government.⁶ (This united front of all workers is to be sharply distinguished from a people's front, advanced by the Communists, which also included in the government non-working class elements of capitalist orientation and outlook, opposed to a revolutionary working class program.) Socialists alleged that under Caballero working class unity was achieved, and even Anarchists participated in the government.

Opposition to Political Persecutions of Non-Fascists. The Socialist party accused the successors of Caballero of inaugurating a campaign of persecution, assassination, terror and imprisonment against those elements of the working class not in sympathy with the People's Front aims and program of the Loyalist government. Largely at the behest of the Communist party, members of the Spanish P.O.U.M. were disarmed, imprisoned and shot as traitors, spies and agents of Franco. Their major crime, according to the Socialist party, was to advocate a program of revolutionary Marxism (including such planks as nationalization of farm land, socialization of heavy industry, creation of a workers' army, monopoly of foreign trade, freedom for Morocco, etc.). However correct or incorrect their program may have been, Socialists did not believe they were fascists nor should they have been treated as such. Persecution of the POUM and anarchists groups made revolutionary unity impossible.¹

⁵Caballero, op. cit.

⁶Idem.

¹Socialist Call, Feb. 26, 1938, p. 5; Oct. 1, 1938, p. 3.

Towards a Socialist Spain. Socialists maintained that the fight to defeat fascism could have succeeded only by fighting for a Socialist Spain; that only a program of socialization of industry for the proletariat, nationalization of land for the peasantry, and freedom for the Spanish colonies could have given meaning and significance to the workers' and peasants' struggle against fascism. The fight for "democracy" was a futile concession. Had it succeeded, the victory at best would have resulted in the restoration of the ante-bellum status quo which made the fascist revolt possible in the first instance.²

"We will give our encouragement to a program for Spain based on the realization that the successful conclusion of the present conflict and the establishment of a Socialist Spain depend upon the progressive establishment of committees of workers, peasants and militiamen and the eventual transformation of such bodies into a workers' government; upon workers' control of production and the collectivization of the important industrial plants; upon the systematic turning of land over to the peasantry; upon the freeing of Spanish colonies; and upon the granting of autonomy to national minorities within the framework of the federal structure.

"The workers and peasants, and even large sections of the middle class, can be won to support of the present struggle, as well as to the establishment of a new social order, not on the basis of the status quo or the restoration of a discredited 'democracy' but on the basis of a new life for the masses on a Socialist foundation."³

The S.P. sharply opposed the People's Front program of the Loyalist government strongly supported by the Communist party, in keeping with the latter's basic orientation. Norman Thomas accused the Communist International of sacrificing Spain to the foreign policy of the Soviet Union, which demanded that the fight in Spain be for "democracy" rather than social revolution, lest the democratic allies of the Soviet Union (Great Britain and France) be offended and break off their alliances with the U.S.S.R.

² Socialist Handbook--1937, pp. 34-35.

³ Idem.

" . . . The communist espousal of 'democracy versus fascism' and the aggressive communist effort to hold back social revolution in Spain in favor of 'democracy' -- but a democracy which denies civil liberty to its critics of the left -- are derived almost solely from Stalin's eagerness to make Russia secure by winning for her mighty allies against the attack which she considers inevitable."⁴

⁴ Thomas, Democracy versus Dictatorship, p. 20.

CHAPTER X

THE SOCIALIST PARTY: STRATEGY AND TACTICS

The Socialist party, in its literature, has not attempted to distinguish strategy from tactics by any hard and fast line. In a general way, strategy deals with the broad fundamental policies to be pursued to build the Socialist movement in the United States, while tactics are concerned with the day-to-day policies the party must adopt to give leadership and direction to the working class in its struggle for better working and living conditions.

The chief strategic problems the Socialist party has concerned itself are the following: a correct trade union policy; its relations to other working class parties and economic organizations; its position on the farmer-labor party; its participation in mass organizations; its program for Negro emancipation; the farmer's problem.

The Socialist party has pointed out that it is not sufficient merely for the party to concern itself with the ultimate goal of a classless society based upon production for use. The lot of the workers must be improved in here-and-now; promises for a better and brighter future are not enough. Hence it has ceaselessly waged a struggle for social, political and economic reforms under capitalism. These ameliorative measures have made up its program of immediate demands and constitute its tactics. On this basis it has asked workers to support its policies generally and join its political organization. Insofar as the program it sponsors is neither inconsistent nor incompatible with its ultimate goal, there can be no objections, Socialists have argued.

" . . . any one is a revolutionist who seeks to conquer the political power for an hitherto oppressed class, and he does not lose this character if he prepares and hastens the conquest by social reforms wrested from the ruling classes. It is not the striving after social reforms but the explicit confining of one's self to them which distinguishes the social reformer from the social revolutionist. . . ."¹

" . . . Our concern . . . arises from our conviction that socialism means something now as well as in the future; that you cannot feed children with the bread of Utopia any more than with pie in the sky by and by; that the revolt of half-starved and desperate men, however justified, will not build the co-operative commonwealth in the complexities of a machine age. . . ."²

Trade Union Position

The Socialist party regards the trade union as the basic organization of workers along economic and class lines. It therefore realizes fully its grave responsibility for the far-reaching consequences of the policies it advances and for the activities of its members in the unions.

"The Socialist Party recognizes that the trade unions, no matter how conservative, are organs of the class struggle and schools for Socialism. Without trade unions, even the most elementary labor struggles would be impossible. . . ."¹

"Workers of town and country must be strongly organized on economic as well as on political lines. The ceaseless struggle of the labor unions and farm organizations, and the constructive work of bona fide cooperative societies, are necessary, not only for the immediate defense and betterment of the condition of the producing class, but also to give producers the education and self-discipline required for the efficient administration of the industries of which they are to win control, and to serve as bulwarks against any possible capitalist attempt to establish a Fascist dictatorship or overthrow a workers' government."²

"1. The Socialist Party of the United States reaffirms that the trade union movement is the broadest organization base for the workers' struggle for their most elementary economic and political demands.

"2. Our party therefore identifies itself with the trade union movement in these struggles. It indicates to the workers that through the struggle for their demands against the capitalist class will the workers forge a mighty weapon for their liberation.

¹ Kautsky, The Social Revolution, p. 9.

² Thomas, The Socialist Cure for a Sick Society, pp. 22-23.

¹ Socialist Call, Draft For a Program for the Socialist Party of the United States, p. 21.

² Socialist Handbook--1937, p. 17.

"3. In supporting the trade union movement we are forever mindful of its shortcomings and limitations. The trade unions, because of their elementary character, are interested primarily in obtaining immediate economic gains. As a consequence of this primary interest the role of the trade union is necessarily limited. With its emphasis on immediate aims, the trade union movement cannot alone be the instrument for the emancipation of the working class from capitalism. The Socialist party represents the interests of the entire working class and is prepared to serve its ultimate as well as its immediate aims."³

Trade Union Unity. The fundamental trade union position advocated by the Socialist party over a long period of years has been that of trade union unity. It has consistently believed that little justification can be found for splitting workers into rival, dual unions. During the period preceding 1935, when the Communist party set up the Trade Union Unity League, as a rival to the American Federation of Labor, despite the very many obvious shortcomings of the latter, the S.P. refused to split the labor movement by fostering internal schisms.⁴

Industrial Unionism. The S.P. has also favored industrial unionism as against craft unionism. In the controversy between the A.F.L. and the C.I.O., its support has been thrown to the position taken by the latter. But again, it has been loathe to have the labor movement split wide open, and therefore has preferred that both groups come to terms and work out a modus operandi, whereby strongly entrenched craft unions would not be disturbed, but the extensive organization of unorganized workers along industrial lines would not be prevented or interfered with by the proponents of craft unionism.¹

"The Socialist party endorses the C.I.O. and urges unanimous support from its party members."²

"It is therefore the duty of progressive forces in the labor movement -- both in the C.I.O. and A.F. of L. -- to strive to preserve the unity of labor

³Ibid., p. 46.

⁴Ibid., pp. 43-44.

¹Ibid., pp. 43, 48-49.

²Idem.

in such a manner that it will be possible to organize the workers in mass production industries along industrial lines while preventing wasteful and exhausting conflicts where craft unions are solidly entrenched."³

Role of Socialists in the Trade Unions. The Socialist party believes that its members have an important part to play in the growth and development of trade unionism in the United States. As class-conscious workers who have devoted themselves to the establishment of a new social order, they must become leaders in their trade unions, assume positions of confidence and trust, and, by their honesty, integrity and devotion, gain the respect and confidence of their fellow-workers who will be willing to follow their leadership. As leaders, moreover, they must pursue policies of militant trade unionism and carry on a relentless struggle against compromise with, and concession to, the capitalist class. It is their further duty and responsibility to win over to membership in the Socialist party the more politically oriented and class conscious members of the trade unions to which they belong.⁴

"It is the duty of every Socialist wage worker to be a loyal and active member of the union in his industry or trade, and to strive for the strengthening and solidifying of the trade union movement. It is the duty and privilege of the entire Socialist movement to aid the unions in their struggles for better wages, increased leisure, and better conditions of employment."⁵

The task of socialists is not merely that of organization, but of education as well. They must constantly impress upon their fellow trade unionists that the struggle for better working conditions and higher wages is but one phase of the battle. The real enemy, they must point out, is the capitalist system itself, which perennially breeds overproduction, unemployment, depressions and finally war, and that only the establishment of a socialist society can bring peace and plenty for all.⁶

³ Ibid., p. 44.

⁴ Ibid., p. 47.

⁵ Ibid., p. 18.

⁶ Ibid., p. 47.

Fraction Work in Trade Unions. Although a dissenting opinion still exists within the party,¹ Socialists no longer take the position that the party must remain "neutral" in the problems of the trade union. They hold that the struggles of the trade union are vital to the growth and development of the Socialist movement, and that Socialists as Socialists must take positions on trade union questions and fight for their adoption in an organized fashion.²

"Since the Socialist Party represents the general interests of the working class and not only their political interests, it is its duty to assist in and guide the struggles of the workers along every other front in the class struggle, particularly in organized labor activities. In fact, the Socialist Party cannot possibly grow and achieve its ultimate objective unless a powerful and progressive labor movement is built.

"The Socialist Party therefore has a vital concern in the policies pursued by the trade unions. It repudiates the view that the party as such should observe a policy of neutrality towards organized labor's problems. It therefore lays down a policy on the main issues confronting the labor movement which it requires its members to so serve and wholeheartedly advocate for adoption by the entire labor movement. . . ."³

Of recent years, therefore, following in the footsteps of the Communist party, the Socialist party has organized Socialist leagues in the trade unions, and other mass organizations in order to carry out its objectives more effectively. Every Socialist must be a member of a trade union if such exists in his particular work. The Socialist members of each trade union constituting a league, must meet regularly, discuss the problems of their union, agree upon policies to be pursued, and act in unity after a decision has been reached. Each league, moreover, must obtain directives from the party itself, and ascertain, before acting, whether the party has adopted a policy to cover any given situation. Socialists who fail to join a trade union,

¹Porter, Which Way for the Socialist Party? p. 23. Krzycki, The Unions and the Socialists, p. 9.

²Kantorovitch, "The Socialist Party and Trade Unions," American Socialist Quarterly (November, 1935), Vol. IV, No. 3, pp. 34-44.

³Socialist Call, Draft for a Program for the Socialist Party of the United States, p. 21.

or who do not work with the league and follow its decisions, are subject to disciplinary action by the party.

"The Socialist party, therefore, makes it mandatory upon all its members who are eligible to join a trade union in their industry to do so, and where none is in existence to participate in the formation of one.

"The Socialists in each trade union body -- local, national, central labor or state -- shall combine in a Socialist League for the purpose of carrying out Socialist work among the workers in an intelligent, organized manner."⁴

Trade Union Program.¹ In addition to the policies of trade union unity, support of the industrial union trend, and the carrying on of a "vigorous class struggle policy", the Socialist party has urged its members to base their activities upon the following program: support of trade union democracy; opposition to discrimination in jobs and pay on the basis of race, color, sex or age; agitation for civil liberties; opposition to war and fascism; support of social legislation for better working and living conditions; agitation for independent working class political action in the form of a farmer-labor party.

Participation in Other Mass Movements. The Socialist party has urged its members to participate in other mass organizations besides trade unions, and, where necessary organizations do not exist, help in their formation, growth and development.

Socialists have regarded mass organizations as instruments for organizing farmers and workers to realize specific objectives. In them, Socialists have held, workers develop greater class consciousness, are quickened for the class struggle, learn of the inadequacies of the capitalist system and, if sufficiently orientated, prepared for active participation in a political movement for its overthrow. As a result of contacts in mass move-

⁴Socialist Handbook--1937, p. 46.

¹Idem. Socialist Call, Dec. 21, 1935, p. 4; June 6, 1936, p. 5.

ments, Socialists have attempted to gain new recruits for membership in the Socialist party.

The general principles underlying Socialist participation in trade unions have also been carried over into mass organizations. In each of them, Socialists have organized leagues which meet regularly for determining the best policies to be pursued in these organizations. Although they do not attempt to "dominate" the mass organizations, they act in accordance with fundamental policies of the Socialist party from which they receive directives to guide them in their work."²

After much agitation the Socialist party finally concurred in the position taken for some time by its most active members:

"1. Every socialist in every mass organization must be activized and be made responsible to a central directing source.

"2. Socialists within any given unit in any mass or trade organization must meet and jointly decide the best course of tactics along the line of policy laid down by the party.

"3. Socialists should not, and must not, construe this to be a sectarian course. On the contrary, through gains by uniting socialists for a socialist program, through the activity of the socialists, we must expand and influence unattached liberal and open-minded progressive workers."³

"The Socialist Party realizes that not all of the interests of the workers can today be properly taken care of by the Socialist Party alone. Furthermore, many workers who do not accept the full Socialist position are willing to cooperate with us on a common partial program and can thus be brought nearer to the Party. The Party will therefore help in the building of organizations catering to the special needs and interests of the workers (cultural, sport, housewives, anti-war, or anti-fascist, etc.). Such organizations should not be directly affiliated with the Socialist Party. They should be non-party, but not non-partisan, that is, they should be definitely pro-labor. Socialists in such organizations, without becoming narrow and factional, should endeavor to educate these organizations toward Socialism, recruit members for the Socialist Party from the more advanced members, and on appropriate occasions advocate joint action with the Socialist Party or other labor organizations."⁴

² Socialist Call, Socialist Perspectives--1937, p. 6.

³ Murray Gross, "Trade Union Policy and the Socialist Party," American Socialist Monthly (June, 1936), Vol. V, No. 4, p. 8.

⁴ Socialist Call, Draft For a Program For the Socialist Party Of the United States, pp. 29-30.

Some examples of mass organizations where Socialists have participated are the Workers Defense League, the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union, the Keep America Out Of War Committee, The Workers' Alliance, and the Harlem Negro Labor Committee, to name a few. Socialists have also been active in the development of the Cooperative movement throughout the United States.⁵

The United Front¹

The Socialist party has recognized that other working class political parties and economic organizations exist which, while sharing certain limited aims and objectives with the Socialist party, nevertheless differ in their strategy and tactics for accomplishing their ultimate goal. To such parties and organizations the Socialist party offers its cooperation for the achievement of whatever immediate common aims and objectives both can strive without compromising first principles. Such cooperation for specific and limited purposes is formally consummated by agreement of the authorized leadership of all participating organizations, and is binding upon the respective members of each. When such a specific agreement is reached, it is known as a united front agreement or simply as a united front. In each case the participants bind themselves only for the accomplishment of the objective agreed upon; they are free from all further commitments and may act as they please in other regards.

"Considering united action by the workers essential, the Socialist Party favors the united front of all labor organizations, political, economic, fraternal, for the purpose of achieving immediate aims, and of developing labor solidarity. To be effective, a united front must base its roots in the organized labor movement. A formal united front, representative of different political views, but without the organized workers, is futile. The essential function of the united front is to promote the ac-

⁵Socialist Handbook--1937, pp. 50-54

¹Ibid., pp. 30-32.

tion of the working class. Therefore, while favoring united action of all sections and tendencies in the labor movement, the Socialist Party will give first consideration to the need for united action supported by the organized labor movement."²

" . . . the Socialist party should vigorously work for specific cooperative undertakings or united fronts with trade and industrial unions in connection with campaigns for the organization of labor, and in behalf of the unemployed; in the development of consumers' cooperatives; in the formulation of, and agitation for labor legislation and constitutional changes; in the fight against fascism, militarism and war; in the development of working class cultural enterprises, in the building of a genuine farmer-labor party, and in other efforts calculated to advance labor's interest and assist workers in the achievement of a cooperative order of society."³

Socialists have pointed to the 1936 United Labor May Day Parade in New York City as an outstanding example of an effective united front agreement.

"This May Day has demonstrated that united fronts on specific issues can be successfully carried through. It has proven that where there is, on a particular issue, a sufficient basis of agreement there is no reason at all why there can not be unity of action between all sections of the labor movement. It has shown that such unity will not scare away the unions but rather will attract every progressive element. . . ."⁴

The Socialist party has proposed three criteria in determining whether or not a united front agreement should be made:

"1. Whether such action is likely to make the Socialist party more or less effective in the work of reaching the masses in behalf of the object for which cooperation is proposed.

"2. Whether the plan for cooperation proposes the setting up of a committee or committees representative of various branches of the labor and progressive movement, or of only Socialist and Communist groups. The party, in any united front action, must seek to form committees not dominated by any one party, but controlled by groups representative of various forces in the labor and progressive movement.

"3. Whether the proposed united front activities absorb energy of party members out of proportion to the promised results."⁵

² Socialist Call, Draft for a Program for the Socialist Party of the United States, p. 25.

³ Socialist Handbook--1937, p. 30.

⁴ Socialist Call, May 9, 1936, p. 4.

⁵ Idem.

Farmer-Labor Party¹

The Socialist party has never opposed in principle the formation of a Farmer-Labor or Labor party in the United States. (Although important theoretical differences exist between a Farmer-Labor and a Labor party, no attempt has been made in Socialist literature to distinguish very sharply between the two.²

"Support of a Labor Party is implicit in a Marxian position. The slogan 'Workers of the world, unite', is not qualified. It does not mean 'Workers of the world, unite in a simon-pure Marxian organization'. It does not mean 'Unite only on a program acceptable to the most advanced section of the proletariat'. It means precisely what it says: 'Workers of the world, unite'.

"Even if Marx had not left us the specific direction to unite, we would still be under compulsion to enter into a genuine Labor Party, if and when one is formed. . . ."³

But the S.P. has also seriously taken to heart the injunction of Eugene V. Debs who warned against sponsoring the formation of a Labor party which would merely be a third party of capitalism.⁴ Debs inveighed against what he called Socialist participation and loss of identity in a "fake" labor party which was serving as a vehicle for capitalism under another label. He said:

"This does not mean that a labor party shall consist exclusively of workers, but it does mean that all who enter its ranks do so with the understanding that it is a labor party, not a middle-class party, not a reform party, nor a progressive party (of which the Republican and Democratic parties are shining examples) but an open-and-above board labor party, standing squarely on the labor platform, and marshalling its forces to fight labor's political battles for its industrial freedom."⁵

¹Berenberg, "A Labor Party," American Socialist Monthly (May, 1936), Vol. V, No. 3, pp. 2-6. Socialist Handbook--1937, pp. 36-42.

²Cf. Seidman, A Labor Party for America? and Laidler, Toward a Farmer-Labor Party.

³Berenberg, op. cit., p. 2.

⁴Socialist Call, Dec. 26, 1936, p. 6.

⁵Idem.

The Socialist party has recognized that the masses of American workers and farmers are not ready for a full socialist program, and it hopes to head them that way by participating in and giving direction to the developing tendency of a Labor/Farmer-Labor party. It is fully cognizant of the fact that at best this party can only be a necessary stage in the development of the class-consciousness of the American workers, that its program will not be socialist in outlook for a long time, if at all, and that a Labor or Farmer-Labor party cannot supplant the Socialist party.

"The Farmer-Labor Party is not a substitute for a revolutionary Socialist Party. It cannot be the means for overthrowing capitalism. It is a necessary step in the development of political consciousness in the working class. It will exploit the possibilities of parliamentary action, of social reform, and of gradualism, and will ultimately lead the workers to the conviction that only by the seizure of power will they attain their ends."⁶

It has set forth the following conditions precedent to its support of any Labor/Farmer-Labor movement in the United States:

1. It must be national in character and structure.
2. It must be a mass party numbering millions of followers.
3. It must have the trade unions as the main base.
4. It must be dominated by the working class and its organizations.
5. It must be organized primarily on a federated basis.
6. Affiliation shall be open to all working class organizations, to organizations of farmers and of professions that agree to abide by its constitution and program and to support its nominees in the election campaign."⁷

Nation-Wide Organization. The Socialist party believes that although most labor parties start as state organizations, unless the latter show definite independent working class tendencies, they should not be supported, since their failure tends to discredit the idea in the eyes of the working class.

"Experience with state and local labor parties in the entire period of the existence of the Labor party movement has shown that these organizations,

⁶ Socialist Call, Draft for a Program for the Socialist Party of the United States, p. 24.

⁷ Socialist Handbook--1937, p. 39. Also see: Socialist Call, March 7, 1936, pp. 5-6; June 6, 1936, p. 2; Feb. 13, 1937, p. 6; April 3, 1937, p. 2; May 7, 1938, p. 9; May 14, 1938, p. 8.

as a general rule are unstable, tend toward alliances with the capitalist parties, become hunting grounds for discredited politicians, and, therefore, rather than serve as a focal point for the development of a national labor party, they merely serve to discredit the idea of such a party. The Socialist party shall, therefore, as a general policy, not support or urge the formation of local or state labor parties. Where the party is satisfied that such parties are based upon the broadest strata of the organized working class, are completely independent of old capitalist parties or politicians, have a working class program, and are sufficiently stable to serve as a means of promoting a national Labor party movement, these parties may be supported and joined. In such cases, however, the Socialist party must take steps to guarantee its own parliamentary and electoral existence and independence, so that a collapse of the local or state labor parties will not find the party in a helpless situation.^{#1}

Laidler has made a careful survey of the Farmer-Labor tendencies in state organizations throughout the country and has concluded on a promising note:

"The forces leading to a new political alignment of useful workers of hands and brain are far more powerful than are those in opposition thereto and are bound, despite possible temporary set-backs, to lead in America, as in many other lands -- and in the not distant future -- to a powerful political party dedicated to the security, the comfort and the freedom of the common man."²

A Mass Party. Socialists do not believe that an organization consisting of the left forces under another name constitute a Farmer-Labor party. Unless it has mass support, it cannot be considered an adequate movement.

". . . It should from the outset have mass support. It is ridiculous to believe that if the Socialists, together with communists and a few other radical groups in America, had united this year in a so-called labor party, that in itself would constitute a worth-while party. The communist proposal for a labor party to be created by such a united front, if we had accepted it, would merely have aroused a natural irritation in organized labor's ranks and would have led us to water down our essential Socialist program, somewhat as Earl Browder, the apologetic candidate for president, in certain speeches has watered down the communist program to an opportunistic stew compounded of reforms dear to the hearts of various groups, but -- some of them -- of dubious merit or impossible of achievement under capitalism."³

Trade Union Base. The Socialist party has further held that any Farmer-

¹ Socialist Handbook--1937, p. 40.

² Laidler, op. cit., p. 54.

³ Thomas, Should Labor Support Roosevelt? pp. 3-4.

Labor party which does not have its roots in the trade-union section of the working class movement cannot develop a program which will ultimately emancipate the working class.

" . . . The Socialist party shall under no circumstances participate in or support any movement for the artificial launching of a national Labor party without a substantial mass trade union base and a real possibility for permanent organization."⁴

A Working Class Party. The new party, Socialists have declared, must be essentially working class in its outlook, as contrasted with reformistic third parties of capitalism. Only in this way can there be any adequate guarantee of direction towards a new social order based upon production for use rather than profit.

"When a new party is organized, workers must insist that it be a labor party, not merely a third party. If the new party is to have any real significance, it must be based squarely upon the labor movement, in structure, philosophy, and program. Those who desire merely to make politics honest and to protect small business from monopoly capitalism can only effect a series of minor reforms without presenting a working class program. They can build only a third party of business, somewhat more honest and liberal than the two dominant parties. Liberals are welcome as allies of labor, but they must not be permitted to dominate. Employers and their professional allies are the natural enemies of labor, in politics as in trade union activities. A new party is worth building only if it represents labor in a vigorous fight against these reactionary forces. This can be done only on a working class basis and a working class program."⁵

"It should be more than a reform party. This can be guaranteed in large part by the nature of its composition; it must have its principal support from the ranks of farmers and workers. It must break away from the old capitalist parties as completely as the organized steel workers must break away from the Iron and Steel Institute and the company unions it fosters. It should at least acknowledge as a beginning the need of a new society based on the principle of production for use."⁶

"The Labor party to be a valuable instrument must be a class party of the organized proletariat. It is, therefore, necessary to resist all attempts at alliances with the third party movements which reduce labor organizations to mere appendages of middle class liberals and politicians. . . ."⁷

⁴Socialist Handbook--1937, p. 40.

⁵Seidman, op. cit., p. 12.

⁶Thomas, op. cit., p. 3.

⁷Socialist Handbook--1937, pp. 40-41.

The Socialist party is wary of devoting its energies to a Labor movement whose essential outlook is popular frontism -- collaboration with the petty-bourgeoisie on a program of the latter's making and choosing. It emphatically insists that its program must be a worker's program, first and foremost and only.

" . . . The conception of a Labor party as a People's Front is in essence a capitulation to middle class pressure against a Labor party. A People's Front Labor party will open the door to the discontented petty bourgeoisie to convert a Labor party into a third anti-monopoly capitalist party and thereby an enemy of the labor movement. The Socialist party will, therefore, fight vigorously against all such tendencies."⁸

Party Democracy. It is also important to note, Thomas and others have pointed out, that unless the Labor party is democratic in structure, organization and administration, it will become the vehicle for labor bureaucrats who will not lead the American workers on the path to emancipation.⁹ Genuine inner-party democracy is thus essential for the wholesome functioning of the Labor party.

Federated Basis. The Socialist party will not consider working in a Labor party movement unless it can do so without losing its identity. It believes that the Labor party, not being a substitute for a Socialist party, must not absorb the latter and liquidate its organization.

" . . . The farmer-labor party, to be acceptable to Socialists, must have room in it for the Socialist Party as an organized group, serving in democratic fashion as a vanguard within the new party. The success of the party will depend upon the rapidity with which it can be won to an aggressive international Socialism."¹⁰

"A labor party based upon individual membership as a basic form will tend to be a middle class third party. Only a federated party, based upon the class organizations of the workers, guarantee the mass and class basis of it and prevent it being a mere third party. Individual membership will make easy the entry into a Labor party of anti-labor demagogues and their followers and will thus vitiate the progressive character of the Labor party."¹¹

⁸ Ibid., p. 41.

⁹ Thomas, op. cit., p. 4.

¹⁰ Thomas, op. cit., p. 4.

¹¹ Socialist Handbook--1937, p. 41.

"The Socialist party warns that affiliation of the membership of the party with the Labor party on an individual basis will tend to liquidate the Socialist party as an independent organization by setting up competition in recruiting and allegiance. Under no circumstances can the Socialist party give in to sentiment for Socialist party liquidation out of fear of isolation. By demonstrating to the workers that the struggle against individual membership is a struggle in the interests of a genuine Labor party, the Socialist party will break its isolation and simultaneously preserve its integrity and organization."¹²

"Role of Socialist Party Within Labor Party." "The Socialist party will not merely be a Socialist or educational league or fraction inside such a party, but will be a political party. It will carry on activities both inside and outside the Labor party on all fronts; it will take a stand on all questions of the day; it will elaborate programs of action reaching beyond the program of the Labor party. The Socialist party will recruit membership, present its full program to the workers, and to the workers inside the Labor party in particular, work for the building of a mass revolutionary Socialist party so as to prepare the workers for social revolutionary action."¹³

Steps Towards a Farmer-Labor Party. With the consent of their National Executive Committee, State Socialist organizations (which have considerable autonomy) have attempted to work with genuine independent labor movements wherever they arise, provided these movements are not mere appendages to capitalist parties bent upon electing candidates pledged to the status quo. The resolutions of the National Executive Committee of the S.P. encouraged this position by declaring:

"1 -- Wherever labor organizes its own party under its own banners and its own control, the Socialist Party will explore actively and sympathetically the possibility of membership in it on terms consistent with the advancement of Socialism which requires as an irreducible minimum the right of the party to maintain its own identity and its work for Socialism, and its right to run Socialist Party candidates against capitalist candidates.

"2 -- Wherever there is a labor slate or other arrangement short of a labor party whereby political support is given to candidates of the working class, not on capitalist party tickets, responsible only to labor organizations and the carrying out of a sound labor program, the Socialist Party will give it wholehearted support. It will not only work for the election of such candidates or tickets but will point out the significance of such action in the light of general labor party developments.

"3 -- Wherever there are no organized beginnings of independent working class political action, the Socialist Party by its political campaign and

¹²Ibid., p. 42.

¹³Idem.

its work within the unions will lead in arousing and inspiring workers for such political action. It will sympathetically encourage beginnings of independent working class action and seek to guide its development into a true labor party completely independent of capitalist parties in control, policy and candidates."¹⁴

In New York state, for example, the Socialist party has given its support to those candidates of the American Labor party who have not been endorsed by the Democratic or Republican parties.¹⁵ In the 1937 mayoralty campaign in New York City, the Socialist party withdrew its candidate, Norman Thomas, in order to give greater impetus to the growing movement; but it did not endorse the candidacy of the A.L.P. nominee, La Guardia, because he accepted the nomination of the Republican party.¹⁶ In the gubernatorial race in 1938, the Socialist party refused to endorse the A.L.P. candidate because he too ran on the regular Democratic ticket; instead it nominated its own candidate in this and other instances where independent labor candidates were not presented by the A.L.P.

The Socialist party, on behalf of the growing Farmer-Labor movement, has changed its position on Labor's Non-Partisan League. According to its former analysis, the League was formed in 1936 for the sole purpose of getting for Roosevelt the endorsement of labor under a non-Democratic label; it therefore rejected requests for assistance.¹⁷ The S.P. has since declared that where genuine labor candidates, free from old-party commitments, are nominated by L.N.P.L., the S.P. will give its aid and support.¹⁸

¹⁴ Socialist Call, May 7, 1938, p. 9.

¹⁵ Laidler, op. cit., pp. 38-39.

¹⁶ Idem.

¹⁷ Socialist Call, Feb. 13, 1937, p. 6.

¹⁸ Socialist Call, May 14, 1938, p. 8.

The Negro Question¹

Socialists have maintained that the pivotal point of the fight for Negro emancipation must center about the struggle for equality. All rights and privileges accorded to white persons, as workers and citizens, must likewise be demanded for Negroes. There must be no discrimination whatever. In the trade unions, for example, Socialists have raised the slogan, "Erase the color line in the labor movement."

The S.P. has also believed that an aggressive battle must be fought to give the Negro genuine civil liberties in the North as well as in the South; that all forms of discrimination -- political, social, cultural and economic -- must be strenuously opposed.

Socialists have also urged that even as race suppression must be opposed, so must its very opposite, race patronage, whether from New Deal politicians or from the Left, be vigorously counteracted. Race equality, says the S.P., must not degenerate to glorification of the Negro workers merely because of color, nor to advocacy of measures of exaggerated Negro nationalism. An example of the latter, which Socialists have unequivocally condemned, is the agitation by the Communist party for "self-determination in the Black Belt".²

"The so-called negro problem is not one of physical inheritance but of social environment. It is not a problem which can be solved on anything other than a non-segregated basis of complete equality, educational, political, industrial and social. The Socialist party has correctly sensed that race equality does not mean race patronage any more than it means race suppression. . . ."³

¹Thomas, Human Exploitation, pp. 258-283. Crosswaith and Lewis, True Freedom For Negro and White Labor, passim. Socialist Handbook--1937, pp. 59-60. Socialist Call, April 17, 1937, p. 7.

²This doctrine is discussed from the S.P.'s viewpoint in its criticism of the C.P., infra.

³Socialist Handbook--1937, p. 59.

"Our own negro comrades will be placed quietly and unobtrusively in positions of responsibility, guarding against, however, the danger of 'black chauvinism' as well as 'white chauvinism'."4

The Socialist party has instructed its members to take an active part in the work of the National Negro Congress and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

" . . . Their weaknesses are obvious, but no effective attempt in this work can overlook the opportunity for hand-to-hand conflict with the problem of the American negro and his similarly exploited white brother which they present."5

The Farm Problem¹

Since farmers are generally rugged individualists, Socialists have pointed out that under the present economic system, the former have the illusion of ownership without any of its benefits: their lands are heavily mortgaged to banks; their machinery is purchased at exorbitant prices; with excessive interest payments to finance companies; they receive low prices for their produce because of pressure from distributors, and because workers are unable to buy the food they need. On the other hand, the Socialists goal of agricultural collectivization guarantees the benefits which come from ownership without any of its illusions: economic security and a share in the produce of the collectives.

In actual campaigning, however, little emphasis is placed upon the ultimate goal. Stress is rather laid upon the immediate reforms which a Socialist government could institute to benefit farmers and ease their burdens. Immediate relief would be afforded by such measures as: government credit and mortgages to supplant those of the Eastern bankers; lower taxes, higher

⁴Ibid., p. 60.

⁵Idem.

¹Thomas, Human Exploitation, pp. 40-71. Nelson, Farmers--Where Are We Going? passim. Socialist Handbook--1937, pp. 54-58. Socialist Call, Sept. 26, 1936, pp. 6-7; Oct. 17, 1936, p. 3.

prices for their produce; cooperative marketing facilities; stabilization of farm prices; insurance against drought and crop failure; establishment of farm co-operatives upon a voluntary basis, with government aid and assistance.²

In the agricultural program adopted by the Socialist Party in 1934, the following are the only provisions raising in any way the issue of farm ownership:

"The farmer desires security in the tenure of his farm, which serves as both his home and the means of his livelihood.

"To accomplish this end we propose use as the sole title to land. This will not effect the title of farmers who now farm their own land.

"Those farmers who wish to transfer title of their lands to the government may obtain leases for land rent free on the basis of occupancy and use. They shall not be liable for any taxes except the crop tax to support the government. This tax shall be collected in kind and never in cash. The requirement of occupancy under this provision shall not be applied to bona fide co-operatives or farmers who reside in communities.

"Plantations worked by share-croppers and day laborers are to be taken over by the public and farmed by individual farmers who have use leases or by co-operatives of working farmers."³

Immediate Demands

The theory of immediate demands, already briefly indicated, is that workers need guidance in their struggles for better working and better living conditions. In giving this aid to workers, Socialists hope to foster the growth of class consciousness and win them over to the cause of Socialism and to membership in the Socialist party. In their struggle for the realization of immediate goals, workers learn how adamantly these are opposed by the capitalists and how the real obstacle in the way of social reform is the capitalist system itself.

At its 1936 Convention, the Socialist Party adopted a program of immediate demands which included the following proposals: (1) social owner-

² Socialist Handbook--1937, pp. 56-58.

³ Nelson, op. cit., pp. 15-16.

ship of "banks, mines, railroads, the power industry and all key industries"; (2) Federal unemployment relief and P.W.A. projects; (3) Social security for old age; (4) passage of the American Youth Act to meet the educational and economic needs of young people; (5) a thirty-hour week for labor and the recognition of the right of collective bargaining; (6) increase in inheritance and income taxes; (7) a program of farm relief; (8) complete civil liberties for Negroes and whites; (9) no expenditures for armament programs; (10) op-¹position to all capitalist wars.

The posters carried at May Day parades throughout the country raised these slogans as succinct statements of the S.P.'s immediate demands:

- "1-- Left the Embargo Against Loyalist Spain.
- 2--Expose Roosevelt's Fake Neutrality.
- 3--Boycott Japanese Goods.
- 4--Workers' Action Against Fascist Aggression.
- 5--Homes for Life--Not Battleships for Death.
- 6--War Funds for Unemployment Relief.
- 7--Keep America Out Of War.
- 8--Down with War and Fascism.
- 9--Organize the Unorganized.
- 10--Fight All Wage Cuts.
- 11--Jobs for All.
- 12--Free Mooney and Billings.
- 13--Free All Class War Prisoners.
- 14--For a National Farmer-Labor Party.
- 15--Unity in the Labor Movement.
- 16--Socialize the Machine.
- 17--Pass the American Youth Act.
- 18--Six-Hour Day - Five-Day Week.
- 19--Democracy Through Socialism.
- 20--Down with Capitalism.
- 21--Long Live Socialism." 2

Workers' Rights Amendment.¹ The Socialist party has made its fight against the United States Supreme Court the spearhead of its program for social and economic reorganization in the United States. It has maintained that all efforts for ameliorating the economic and social plight of the

¹Socialist Party, U.S.A., For a Socialist America--1936 National Platform, passim.

²Socialist Call, April 23, 1938, p. 4.

¹Levenstein, Making Freedom Constitutional, pp. 1-11. Laidler, Putting the Constitution to Work, pp. 33-34. Socialist Call, June 8, 1935, p. 3; Jan. 18, 1936, p. 12.

working class have been blocked by reactionary Supreme Court decisions.

It has therefore proposed the passage of an amendment to the United States Constitution, first advocated by Morris Hillquit, giving Congress the following powers now denied to that legislative body by Supreme Court decisions:

"To regulate, limit and prohibit the labor of persons under eighteen years of age;

"To protect by law the right of all employees to organize and bargain collectively with their employers;

"To provide for the relief of the aged, invalid, sick and unemployed;

"To establish, acquire, operate, or regulate agencies for the marketing and processing of agricultural products;

"To establish, acquire, and operate natural resources, properties and enterprises in manufacturing, mining, commerce, transportation, banking, public utilities and in any other business which shall be governed democratically for the benefit of the public by commissions consisting of representatives of workers, consumers, technicians;

"To legislate generally for the social and economic welfare of workers, farmers and consumers."²

Socialists believe that this amendment will stop Supreme Court dictatorship and will make the constitution able to meet the present needs of the workers and farmers of the United States more adequately.

"The Amendment speaks for itself. It establishes and protects workers' rights. It makes it possible for labor to achieve its immediate demands. It says to the Supreme Court: 'Hands off the legislation that Labor has fought for and won! . . .'

"The Hillquit Workers' Rights Amendment makes it possible to start on the road to a better world!"³

" . . . The Workers' Rights Amendment, . . . must be pressed to rapid adoption. Only so can we make Democracy other than a hypocritical pretense in America. A federal Government, with the power a Workers' Rights Amendment will give it, may use that power wrongly. It is the business of workers with hand and brain, in town and country, to gain control of government and use power rightly, but no democratic capture of government power by the workers will be worth much if the dead hand of a written Constitution and the living voice of five out of nine old men on a Supreme Court bench are to be left as the final authority in America over our social and economic life."⁴

The New Deal.¹ Unlike the Communist party which opposed the New Deal

²Socialist Call, May 23, 1936, p. 6.

³Levenstein, op. cit., p. 10.

⁴Ibid., pp. 2-3.

¹Laidler, Socializing Our Democracy, Chapter III. Thomas, The New Deal -- A Socialist Analysis, passim; After the New Deal, What? pp. 16-55.

prior to 1935 and supported it thereafter (on grounds that its policies had changed from reactionary to progressive),² the Socialist party has continuously maintained that the New Deal is not a fascist program and was never intended to be such by its sponsors; that it may be more accurately characterized as measures in the nature of state capitalism designed to bolster up a decadent, capitalist system which is no longer able to maintain itself by pursuing policies of laissez-faire and rugged individualism.

The chief contention of Socialists has not been that the measures advanced by the New Deal have been reactionary, but rather that they have been palliatives which must ultimately fail. To be effective, economic planning requires as a condition precedent the production for use instead of for profit; attempted reforms of the New Deal cannot succeed since they do not strike at the root of the evil. The tenets of capitalism -- private initiative, private industry and private enterprise -- are not challenged by the attempted reforms of the New Deal.³ Only a Socialist society can eliminate the causes of unemployment and depressions and make possible a planned economy of abundance.

" . . . It is easy enough in retrospect to criticize the various efforts of Mr. Roosevelt's New Deal in pursuit of 'recovery and reform' from the standpoint of a sound progressivism theoretically possible under capitalism. Practically I do not believe that any reform measures within the limitations of the American political and economic situation, would have been feasible or successful to a greater degree than the New Deal has been. And that, even the friendly critic must agree, has brought no sense of permanence or security to masses of Americans who suffer all the pangs of poverty in the midst of potential abundance."⁴

"The New Deal is the name for the collection of Roosevelt's policies which have been enacted as law since his inauguration. He himself admits that they are experimental and his reactionary critics have pointed out, in some cases truly enough, that they are not entirely consistent with one another.

"Nevertheless it is unfair to exaggerate the superficial inconsistencies

²Discussed in chapter on Communist party's strategy and tactics, infra.

³Laidler, op. cit., p. 290.

⁴Thomas, Why I Am a Socialist, p. 5.

of the New Deal. By and large it is an emergency effort to increase spending power for farmers and city workers and somewhat to lighten the load of mortgagees and small homeowners. It is an attempt to impose some restrictions on the most vicious forms of exploitation. It seems to be a bold, even a radical program to those who have grown accustomed to stupidity, misrepresentation and plain dishonesty during the Hoover, Coolidge and Harding terms. It is a distinct improvement in this sense but it should be judged in the light of what needs to be done, and not by comparison with Hoover's stupidity. After all, any President would have had to do something in 1933. What Roosevelt did was temporarily to stabilize capitalism with a few concessions to workers that are poor copies of Socialist immediate demands. In no true sense is the New Deal socialism. It is state capitalism, and no howls from these old enemies Hearst and McCormick, Al Smith and Ogden Mills who want to turn the clock back again, can make it anything else."⁵

Election of 1936.¹ The 1936 presidential campaign of the Socialist party, with Norman Thomas as standard-bearer, was conducted chiefly with an eye to persuading the American people that the Rooseveltian New Deal policies were inadequate, could not solve the fundamental dilemmas of American economic life, and, at best, would delay for a brief moment the further collapse of a declining capitalist system. Although it also scored the policies of the Republican candidate, Alf Landon, its main shafts were directed against Roosevelt and the New Deal. And again, traditionally, on its masthead it hoisted up the flag, "Socialism versus Capitalism".

"We are told by many voices, among them the voice of labor leaders who once dared proclaim a nobler message, that the best the workers can do is to rally to Roosevelt against reaction. To this we make two answers: First, that Mr. Roosevelt has not delivered us from poverty, exploitation and war. In short, that the New Deal has not worked. And second, that even if the temporary achievements of the New Deal were infinitely greater than they are it could not long deliver us against the relentless threat of a disintegrating civilization, to war or a new cycle of wars, to a new birth of tyranny in a Fascist form. It is not the Old Deal that has failed or the New Deal that has failed, but the capitalist nationalism of which both are the expression."²

The efforts of the Communist party to create an American People's Front by raising the issue "Democracy versus Fascism," also came in for its

⁵Thomas, The New Deal -- A Socialist Analysis, p. 3.

¹Thomas, After the New Deal. What? pp. 1-15; Shall Labor Support Roosevelt? pp. 2-15; "Why Labor Should Support the Socialist Party," American Socialist Monthly (July, 1936), Vol. V, No. 5, pp. 3-7. Coleman, Symbols of 1936, passim. Thomas and Nelson Independent Committee, Socialism In Our Time, passim.

²Norman Thomas, Socialist Call, May 30, 1936, p. 7.

share of criticism. The Socialist party denied that Landon was a fascist, and that the American fascist movement was supporting him; it called him a rugged individualist of the old order who believed that a return to the ways of the past would best insure economic recovery. Although the Communist party ran its own presidential candidate, Earl Browder, its slogan of defeating Landon at all costs was an indirect method of giving aid and support to Roosevelt, Socialists charged. The S.P. also maintained that by spreading the idea that Roosevelt was a progressive, as contrasted with Landon who was characterized as a fascist, the Communist party was doing the cause of socialism and the common man a great disservice.

"The communist insistence that Landon is a fascist leader -- an insistence copied by certain labor leaders -- is as dangerous as it is inaccurate. I have already said that Landon, or the interests behind him which are stronger than Landon, are in the strict sense of the word reactionary. They want to go back to an older capitalism. They want Coolidge, not Hitler. Today they do not think they have to accept the collectivism and the regimentation of a Hitler or a Mussolini.

"They may secretly aid Lemke to beat Roosevelt but they laugh at or hate his program. Lemke may be to some extent a 'Hearst puppet' or a 'Landon stooge', but that does not explain his movement, or his backers, the Messianic demagogues, Coughlin, Smith and Townsend. They are true fascist forerunners -- Dr. Townsend less than his clerical rivals. But how will we get the people to understand that fact if we call Landon a fascist? The fascist demagogue begins by a radical middle class appeal, not by talking like a Landon, Knox, the Liberty League -- or even like Hearst who wants above all to protect his \$200,000,000 fortune."³

Party Organization¹

New Constitution. The basic organization of the Socialist party is set forth in its revised constitution, adopted at a Special National Convention held in Chicago in March, 1937. The Constitution provides for national, state, district and local organizations.²

³ Thomas, Shall Labor Support Roosevelt? p. 7.

¹ Socialist Handbook--1937, passim.

² Ibid., pp. 62-63.

Party Structure. The Socialist party is governed by a National Executive Committee of twelve members, chosen by majority vote at the National Conventions of the party. Subject only to rulings of the National Conventions and party referenda, the powers of the NEC are plenary. The NEC is empowered to appoint a National Action Committee composed of seven members, at least three of whom must be NEC members. The National Action Committee meets weekly and is empowered to act for the NEC between sessions. The NEC also chooses a National Secretary to help carry on its work.³

National Conventions are held bi-annually. Delegates are chosen on an apportioned basis roughly in proportion to the dues-paying membership in each state. A referendum determines the delegates chosen. The agenda for such conventions is proposed by the NEC.⁴

The Socialist Handbook declares:

"There is one Socialist Party of the United States of America. For convenience of administration there are subdivisions of state, local and branch organizations. But these are mere subdivisions for administrative purposes. . . ."⁵

This declaration is the result of an attempt to increase and centralize the powers of the National organization by giving it authority formerly exercised by state organizations (which exist wherever two or more locals have been established in any state).⁶ Although more and more action taken by state organizations requires the consent and approval of the NEC, actually, however, considerable state autonomy still exists because the constitution gives state organizations residual powers.

³Ibid., pp. 65-68.

⁴Ibid., pp. 69-71.

⁵Ibid., p. 10.

⁶Ibid., p. 63.

" . . . In all matters not determined by national ruling, the state organization shall have autonomy of decision and action. . . ." ⁷

In addition to national and state organization, locals are composed of the members residing in the same city, county or town. Locals in turn may be subdivided into branches where the membership warrants it. There also exist district organizations composed of larger units than a county, often several states. And finally, there are foreign language sections." ⁸

Membership. Membership in the party is open to all persons over 18 years of age (although no member under 21 may vote in the selection of the party's nominees for public office), regardless of race, creed, color, sex or citizenship. Only persons who are members of rival political parties or organizations are excluded. ⁹

All applicants must subscribe to the following declaration:

"I, the undersigned, recognizing the class struggle, hereby apply for membership in the Socialist Party of the United States of America. In all my political actions while a member of the Socialist party, I agree to abide by the constitution, Declaration of Principles, decisions, and platform of the national organization." ¹⁰

All-Inclusive Party. The Socialist party is not a monolithic party. Differences of opinion are permitted to exist within the party on questions of strategy and tactics insofar, theoretically, as there is no outward breach of discipline. The various groups and tendencies within the party have already been considered. ¹¹

"Realizing that the road to Socialism cannot be set in accordance with a preconceived blueprint, the Socialist Party neither expects nor demands unity of thought from its members. Differences of opinion on question of strategy, tactics and interpretation are not only unavoidable, but are beneficial in arriving at correct and unprejudiced conclusions. The Socialist Party recognizes the right of the membership to make whatever changes it desires in its program and constitution, and of individual branches, locals

⁷Idem.

⁸Ibid., pp. 62-64.

⁹Ibid., p. 64.

¹⁰Idem.

¹¹Supra.

or States to propose or initiate such changes. No member, therefore, may be disciplined for any views he holds regarding the possible course of development of the fight for Socialism or of the possible tactics the Party may be compelled to adopt, so long as such views adhere to the fundamental principles on which the Party is based (overthrow of capitalist society and building of a Socialist society through the medium of a Workers and Farmers Government). Eventually, through education and comradely discussion, questions will develop among the Party membership."¹²

Democratic Centralism. The Socialist party has declared that genuine party democracy is a reality within its organization. The elections of members to the NEC and delegates to the national conventions are democratically conducted. Machinery exists for holding referenda on crucial questions affecting the party. Such referenda are conducted if requested by 25% of the delegates attending a national convention, or by five locals from at least three different states with a total membership of 20% of the party.¹³ All conventions and referenda, moreover, are generally preceded by periods of active discussion by the membership of the issues in dispute.

"The Socialist Party, as the forerunner of a new society, practices the highest form of Socialist ethics in its relations with the workers, and with its own members. It conducts its affairs in a highly democratic manner. Its officials are elected directly by the membership, and are subject to the control of the membership. All the policies of the Party are the expression of the will of the membership."¹⁴

Discipline.¹⁵ Unlike the Communist party, based upon a monolithic organization which permits of no deviations, the Socialist party has never had a tradition of rigid discipline. In recent years, since the bolting of the Old Guard, efforts have been made to tighten the control exercised by the national organization over its members. Especially since the inauguration of Socialist leagues within trade unions and other mass organizations, party members have been prohibited from taking positions on political or trade

¹² Socialist Call, Draft for a Program for the Socialist Party of the United States, p. 30.

¹³ Socialist Handbook--1937, pp. 75-6.

¹⁴ Socialist Call, op. cit., p. 30.

¹⁵ Socialist Handbook--1937, pp. 72-73.

union questions at variance with those of the party and leagues.

Section 7 of Article X of the Constitution adopted in 1937 contains a provision covering undisciplined conduct, which was lacking in the Constitution of 1932:

"Members of the Socialist party are responsible to the party for their actions as Socialists in non-party as well as party organizations of the working class and its allies."¹⁶

Sections 8, 9 and 10 of Article X also contain important provisions dealing with discipline. They are also to be found in almost identical terms in the former constitution.

"Section 8. The Declaration of Principles and the Platform of the Socialist party shall be the supreme declaration of the party and all state and local platforms shall conform thereto. No state or local organization shall fuse, combine or compromise with the Democratic, Republican or any other political party whose policies and platform are inconsistent with those of the Socialist party, nor endorse candidates nominated by such parties or political organizations except as provided in Section 9.

"Section 9. State organizations of the party may cooperate with organizations of labor and farmers within their state in independent political action, but such cooperation must in all cases be on the following conditions:

(a) The term 'independent political action' as herein employed shall be understood to mean the nomination and election of candidates by a party of workers and or farmers, organized in express opposition to the political parties supporting capitalism.

(b) State or local organizations of the party desiring to cooperate with political organizations of labor and farmers shall first get the approval of the National Executive Committee, and State Executive Committee having jurisdiction.

"Section 10. Any member of the Socialist party who shall aid in the organization of another political party or in the nomination, campaign or election of candidates other than those of the Socialist party, without the consent of the National Executive Committee, shall be subject to disciplinary action."¹⁷

Education and Propaganda. In order to win new adherents to its organization, the Socialist party, like all political organizations, engages in educational and propaganda work. In addition to the personal work done by its members in trade unions and other mass organizations, the party issues

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 73.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 73.

pamphlets and leaflets from time to time on theoretical phases of Socialism and on the problems and issues confronting the working class. The party has two official organs, The Socialist Review, the official theoretical organ, published bi-monthly, and the Socialist Call, a weekly newspaper.

State, local and branch organizations also issue literature from time to time, intended chiefly for limited distribution. Such literature must conform with the party line and must obtain the approval of the national office.¹⁸

The Socialist party also conducts schools throughout the country where courses in trade unionism, socialism, current problems, public speaking and other allied subjects are given. The schools are regarded as training grounds for future leaders of the party and for giving workers an education in the elements of socialism.

Youth Organization. Socialists regard the training of youth as a most important part of their work; the youth of today becomes the party membership of tomorrow. Two important organizations exist, the Young People's Socialist League (sometimes referred to as the Yipsels) and the Red Falcons of America.

The Y.P.S.L. is open to persons between the ages of 14 and 25, although all over the age of 21 are also required to become members of the party. This organization enjoys a semi-autonomous existence, but it is bound by organizational ties to the Socialist party, and cannot act contrary to any of its principles, declarations or resolutions.¹⁹ A member of the Young People's Socialist League is represented on the National Executive Committee of the Socialist party.²⁰

The Red Falcon is a children's organization, open to boys and girls under fifteen years of age.²¹ Among other things, it prepares boys and girls for membership in the Y.P.S.L.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 78.

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 76-77.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 65

²¹ Ibid., p. 78.

CHAPTER XI

THE SOCIALIST PARTY: CRITICISM OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

In considering the Socialist party's criticism of the Communist party, two important factors must be borne in mind. First, that the change in party line of the C.P. in 1935 resulted in a corresponding change in the criticism of that organization. Consequently, separate presentations must be made for the period preceding and following the Seventh World Congress of the Comintern.

Secondly, after 1936 the Socialist party itself experienced a change in leadership and a leftward shifting of its policies. Some of the criticisms made of the C.P. in 1934 (notably its stand on the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of a dictatorship of the proletariat) by the Old Guard leadership of the S.P. would have been somewhat different had the Socialist party then been under the control of its Militant wing.

Criticism of the Communist Party: Prior to 1935

In matters of theory, we may note that the Socialist party rejected: (1) the necessity for a revolutionary overthrow of capitalism by force; (2) the Leninist conception of the dictatorship of the proletariat. On questions of strategy and tactics, it condemned: (1) the doctrine of social-fascism; (2) the united-front-from-below tactic; (3) the proposed solution of the Negro question.

Other criticisms were also made, notably of the C.P. organization, but these will be dealt with in presenting the S.P.'s estimate of the party since 1935.

Revolutionary Overthrow of Capitalism. Although Socialists in the United States have never dogmatically maintained that Socialism can be achieved by the parliamentary technique alone, they have always held, particularly prior to 1935, that the prospects for its success in highly industrialized countries like the United States have been underestimated, and that before resort is had to force and violence, the possibilities of a peaceful transition should first be exhausted. They further have argued that the responsibility for violence should rest upon the capitalist class resisting a popular mandate, rather than upon the shoulders of the workers.¹

"It is only when the Socialist movement has developed to a point of strength and maturity at which it can successfully challenge the political rule of the bourgeoisie, when the objective and subjective conditions for a Socialist revolution are present, that the question of force or violence acquires a practical significance."²

"The hypothesis that at the decisive moment the ruling capitalist classes in the different countries will not surrender to the proletariat without a physical struggle has always been accepted as reasonable by the Socialists of the Marxian school. The new elements which Communism has introduced into the theory is the dogmatic certainty of the inevitability of violence and the tendency to consider it in the light of an offensive rather than defensive weapon."³

". . . The Marxian view of a secretly armed minority assuming power at a single stroke is unthinkable in the modern state. It would have to imply either the existence of a government so weak that it had practically ceased to be a government at all, or, what is perhaps, an equivalent, a population actively sympathetic to the revolutionary minority"⁴

" . . . For in a period of universal suffrage, it ought then to be possible to capture the seat of power at the polls, and throw upon the capitalist the onus of revolting against a social democracy."

Another objection is raised against the implications of the conception of violent overthrow. By Lenin's own analysis, conditions for a successful

¹Laidler, History of Socialist Thought, pp. 523-525, 536-538.

²Hillquit, From Marx to Lenin, p. 94.

³Ibid., p. 95.

⁴Laski, Karl Marx; An Essay, p. 42.

⁵Ibid., p. 43.

revolution presuppose a nation demoralized by war and hunger which has lost faith in its government and is ready to descend into the streets and fight for the destruction of the existing system. Socialists maintain that such a prospect does not offer much promise for the future if it is first necessary to wait until the United States is at the brink of disaster before a new type of society can possibly emerge.⁶

Finally, Socialists have argued, the likelihood of success by a revolutionary upsurge is small in a highly industrialized country like the United States. Here capitalism is too well organized and too well entrenched. Only in a backward country like Russia, where capitalism was not fully developed could the workers overcome it.⁷

Dictatorship of the Proletariat. Hillquit and many Socialists have believed that the advocacy of proletarian dictatorship is an unwise strategic move; that insofar as Socialists have a philosophy of ultimate suppression of all opposition on the acquisition of power, their demands for freedom of speech, press and assemblage will be regarded as insincere and their prospects of obtaining them at the hands of the capitalist class will be exceedingly slim.¹

Speaking of the proletariat dictatorship, Norman Thomas has said:

"I am a Socialist because I think it is very poor strategy to put the kind of emphasis that Communists have put in America upon the inevitability of great scale violence, and of a dictatorship, described as a dictatorship of the proletariat, and as equivalent to a working class democracy, but which is in effect a dictatorship of one party, and not a control by the working class."²

Theoretical considerations aside, Socialists have maintained, in the Soviet Union the dictatorship of the proletariat has degenerated to a one-

⁶ Ibid., pp. 524-526.

⁷ Thomas, The Socialist Cure for a Sick Society, p. 18.

¹ Laidler, op. cit., pp. 538-540.

² Thomas and Browder, Debate: Which Road for American Workers, Socialist or Communist? p. 9.

man dictatorship. Instead of observing a steady growth of democracy, there has sprung up a bureaucracy controlled by Stalin which has become more and more arbitrary and despotic. The withering away of the state, envisaged by Marx and Lenin, has not materialized; if anything, the Soviet state has become more solidly entrenched under arbitrary rule.³

"For a Socialist who understands the nature of his party there can be no compromise with dictatorship, because dictatorship demands the constant and complete submission of the human being to its commands, without the slightest hesitation and questioning. The submission dictatorship demands is the submission of a corpse. It is the most extreme form of militarization of the state."⁴

"Socialists in contrast, believe that the class conflict does not rule out democracy, especially in a country which, like America, has a tradition of democracy. Democracy, as Kautsky has pointed out, has educational value for the workers that no dictatorship can have."⁵

" . . . Once a communist dictatorship is achieved it can carry through a consistent program more logically than can a party in the hurly-burly of political democracy. The advantage, we have argued, in the Western world is not so great as the cost of attaining such a dictatorship and the loss of liberty that at best it entails. . . ."⁶

Finally, Socialists have pointed out, Marx's writings on the dictatorship of the proletariat are sketchy and not fully worked out, and there can be little certainty that he would have subscribed to Lenin's State and Revolution, especially since he (Marx) admitted of the possibilities of a peaceful transition in some countries.⁷

" . . . There is little said in Marx's writings of the dictatorship of the proletariat and it is by no means certain that by it he meant what Lenin called into being. . . ."⁸

³Laidler, op. cit., pp. 539-540. Thomas, America's Way Out, p. 307.

⁴Kautsky, Communism and Socialism, p. 49.

⁵Kautsky

⁵Thomas, The Socialist Cure for a Sick Society, p. 17.

⁶Thomas, America's Way Out, p. 153.

⁷Thomas, op. cit., p. 60.

⁸Idem.

Theory of Social Fascism.¹ The strategy and tactics of the Communist International during the period following the Sixth World Congress (1928-1935) were held to be profoundly mistaken, predicated upon incorrect basic assumptions. Socialists denied that the masses were everywhere up in arms and ready to revolt, and that the Social Democrats stood in the way of their revolutionary upsurge.

They likewise denied that the Social Democratic leadership was essentially more conservative than the masses; they held, rather, that it was quite representative of them. Socialists further charged that the contention of the Communists that the Social Democrats and the Fascists were brothers under the skin, and that the Social Democratic leadership was deliberately acting as a brake upon the masses in order to preserve capitalism, were brazen lies.

" . . . According to this theory the chief enemy of socialism was neither capitalism nor fascism, it was social democracy and the socialist movement generally. The fight against capitalism and fascism is important, indeed, but it will have to wait. First comes the fight against the 'chief enemy', the socialist movement. When we are done with this 'main bulwark of capitalism' we will turn our weapons against capitalism and fascism. The history of the communist movement is a history not of fighting capitalism, but socialism."²

Commenting on the theory of social fascism in a debate with Earl Browder, Norman Thomas declared:

" . . . I do not acquit the German Social Democrats, from all the responsibility for the tragic failure, when I say that the primary cause of the bitter division in labor ranks was the sectarian line, the insistence that it was not Fascism, but the Social Fascists, that is to say, the Social Democrats, who were the peril. . . .

. . . Here, for instance, I am quoting from 'The Communist', January, 1933. . . . It says -- mind you, this is in January, 1933, remember the date: 'Therefore, to beat the enemy, the bourgeoisie, we must direct the main blow against its chief social bulwark, against the chief enemy of Communism in the working class, against Social Democracy, against Social Fascism. . . .'³

¹The reader is urged to consult the section on this topic as presented by the Communist party, infra.

²Kantorovitch, "Notes on the United Front Problem," American Socialist Monthly, (May, 1936), Vol. V, No. 3, p. 8.

³Thomas and Browder, op. cit., pp. 10-11.

In answer to Dimitroff who has put the blame upon the shoulders of the Social Democrats of Germany for the victory of fascism, Socialists have put in a vigorous denial.

"This, it is clear, is the old tune. Where is the culpability of the German communists and of the Comintern itself in all this? How about the communist opposition to the united front. How about the united front with the fascists in the infamous 'Red Referendum'? How about the united front with the fascists in the Prussian Landtag to overthrow the Braun-Severing socialist government, making way for Von Papen?"4

Socialists quote from T. Gusev' speech before the twelfth plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International to indicate the absurdity and extreme unrealism to which the theory of social fascism had driven the Communists. In that speech, Gusev advanced the orthodox Communist position, denying that the real menace to the working class was fascism.

" 'It may seem that in Germany at the present time, for example, the chief social bulwark of the bourgeoisie is fascism, and that therefore we should deal the chief blows against fascism.

" 'This is not correct. It is not correct first, because fascism is not the chief enemy in the workers' movement, but social fascism is our chief enemy there.'"5

Socialists further charged that the lumping of the Social Democratic leadership with the fascists made a genuine united effort of the Socialist and Communist sections of the working class impossible; that in Germany this false doctrine of social fascism led to the triumph of Hitler by promoting disunity; that in the last analysis, the Communist International must bear the chief responsibility for the complete collapse of the working class movement.

"The theory of 'social fascism' was evolved to undermine the faith of the workers in the Socialist movement. It has proved the most effective aid to counter-revolution. In Germany it led to Hitler's victory, in that it prevented effective proletarian unity. . . ."6

⁴Zam, "One Step Forward -- Three Steps Backward: The Seventh World Congress of the Communist International," American Socialist Monthly (Nov., 1935), Vol. IV, No. 3, p. 48.

⁵Kantorovitch, Towards Socialist Reorientation, pp. 6-7.

⁶Berenberg, "The Bankruptcy of American Communism", American Socialist Quarterly (Dec., 1934), Vol. III, No. 4, pp. 44.

" . . . until the actual victory of Hitler had become an established fact the Communists, in the press, literature, and by word of mouth, diligently taught the German workers that the real enemy was not fascism but social fascism (i.e. Socialism), thus making impossible that united action about which they talked so eloquently."⁷

"During the last few years, above all since 1927, the communists have given evidence of an increasingly intensified activity against the social democrats and the masses organized within the trade unions. Neither in capitalism or in fascism, but in the social democratic masses do they think they see their chief enemy. Being incapable of comprehending that the non-communist workers keep away from communism out of inner conviction, they regard the political outlook of the working class as the work of the devil and his earthly representatives, the social democratic leaders. They fail to understand that these leaders are merely representatives of the reformist outlook which pervades the masses, for they regard the entire non-communist majority of the working class, whether organized or not, as revolutionary. For this reason, they do not need to take any special trouble about them. They need only rail at them on the ground that they still draw no conclusions from their revolutionary convictions and that they refuse to join the Comintern movement either directly or indirectly by becoming members of one of the Communist auxiliary organizations.

"In this way the Communist Party has not only steadily widened the gap between the communist and non-communist workers, but it has also driven itself into a more and more fatal position of mental and political isolation from all the other sections of society. Instead of winning over the masses, as they wish, the communists merely win over their own followers, again and again, in continually new forms. The victory of fascism would not have been possible but for this disastrous and absurd policy of the Communist Party."⁸

United-Front-From-Below.¹ Socialists have charged that from 1928 to 1935, to limit the problem, Communists were never sincere in their demands for a united front. A genuine united front presupposes an agreement between the leadership of both parties, binding upon their respective organizations. What the C.P. did was to appeal to the members of the S.P. for common action, over the heads of their leaders, who were called "social fascists", "enemies of the working class", and "the chief bulwark of fascism". This was not a genuine attempt at a united front but rather a strategic maneuver to wean away from the S.P. its following. Consequently, it was impossible for both

⁷Kantorovitch, Problems of Revolutionary Socialism, pp. 23-24.

⁸Miles, Socialism's New Beginning, p. 101.

¹Tyler, The United Front, pp. 3-9, 13-19. Page, Individualism and Socialism, pp. 231-235. Kantorovitch, "The United Front," American Socialist Quarterly (Dec., 1934), Vol. III, No. 4, pp. 16-25.

parties to work together for the realization of common working class objectives.² Thus the failure of the united front was laid directly at the door of the Comintern because it expounded the false and dishonest (to Socialists) theory of social fascism.

Norman Thomas and other Socialists have quoted statements appearing in the Communist press to indicate the alleged lack of sincerity of Communists who so ardently professed the desire for a united front with Socialists during the period.

" 'The United Front is not the peace pact with reformists. The United Front is a message of struggle against the reformists, against the Social Fascists for the possession of the masses,' and so on. . . . 'Precisely why we refuse the united front with them is because we must take their followers away from them.'"³

"In Communist language 'united front' is a name for their most popular weapon for breaking up all non-Communist working-class organizations.

"Needless to state, such a 'united front' is no united front at all. A sincere desire to work for a common aim is the first essential for the united front. But if one party enters the 'united front' for the purpose of stabbing its ally in the back a real united front becomes impossible.

"It is an interesting comment on Communist psychology that while they come to non-Communist working class organizations with the cry, 'We sincerely want a united front', they tell their own members that it is merely a strategic maneuver to smash other workers' organizations'.

"Thus I. Komor, in relating the purpose of the 'united front' in the official Communist document states:

" 'The executive committee emphasizes that the application of the united front tactics is the duty of every Communist Party, that this tactic constitutes a powerful means of exposing the opportunism of the reformist leaders and of dissociating the toiling masses from the leaders, and also of uniting the proletarian masses under the banner of the Comintern.' (Ten Years of the Comintern, p. 27.)

"Here is the policy of 'rule or ruin' stated simply. But many of the Communist parties and their leaders made the mistake of thinking that the Comintern wanted a real united front. They actually formed sincere coalitions with other working-class parties. This was just exactly what the Comintern did not want. And it said so"⁴

" . . . 'Boring from within' tactics and appeals for a united front when they were the order of the day were all very well on paper, but when the invitation reads 'Come on, you yellow dogs, let's unite' and it is an-

² New Leader, Sept. 8, 1934, p. 11; Dec. 15, 1934, p. 6.

³ Thomas and Browder, op. cit., p. 11.

⁴ Tyler, op. cit., pp. 6-7.

nounced that support of a union leader is, as Lenin once advised British communists, the support of a rope to a man about to be hanged, it is small wonder that the invitation is refused and the boring-from-within process fought fiercely by its intended victims, often with more vigor than wisdom or fairness. . . .⁵

Dual Unionism.¹ Socialists have charged that the formation of the Trade Union Unity League by the Communist party, which resulted in dual unionism, or rival union organizations bidding for the support of the American workers, also resulted from its faulty orientation. Its assumptions, that the workers were more radical than their leaders who were keeping them from giving vent to their revolutionary impulses, and that new channels must be provided for utilizing the mass discontent, were branded as false and dangerous. Socialists regarded labor unity as paramount, and that all efforts to bring American workers to acceptance of and participation in programs of militant class action should be exerted in the existing A.F. of L. unions. Socialists refused to accept the thesis that all labor leaders who did not subscribe to the Communist position were betrayers and enemies of the working class. They further pointed out that the failure of the "Red" unions to grow showed the faulty analysis upon which they were based, and, that with few exceptions, they were at best only paper unions with no rank-and-file following.

Negro Question.² Although expressing admiration for the work done by Communists in organizing Negro workers, Socialists have rejected completely the solution sponsored by the Communist party for the Negro question: self-determinism in the Black Belt.

Socialists have said that this theory is based upon a false analogy with the minority question in the Soviet Union.³ Although their oppression cannot be denied, Negroes nevertheless do not constitute a nationality with

⁵Thomas, America's Way Out, pp. 92-93.

¹Berenberg, op. cit., pp. 40-41.

²Crosswaith and Lewis, True Freedom for Negro and White Labor, pp. 35-36.

³Berenberg, op. cit., p. 46. Thomas and Browder, op. cit., p. 33.

traditions and aspirations apart from American workers generally. Above all, they desire to partake of American life and be accorded the political, economic and social rights granted to all other Americans. They do not desire to be set off and apart from the rest of the United States, Socialists hold. Efforts, moreover, to create a Black Belt in the South are fraught with peril. Negroes do not constitute a contiguous majority. Such a plan will arouse the enmity of the Whites and make cooperation between white and black workers impossible.⁴

"Under the guise of 'Self Determination in the Black Belt' Communists are appealing to Negroes to set up a Black State or states in the South. Such a program differs from Garveyism only in degrees of fanaticism and grotesque spectacularism. The latest Census figures show that only two Southern states have a bare majority of Negroes. When this fact was called to their attention, the Communists said they proposed to take each county which has a Negro majority and place it within the Black State. But the population figures for counties showed that any such state would not have continuous boundaries, because while there are counties with a negro majority, they are separated from similar counties by counties which have a white majority. It would be practically impossible to administer the affairs of such a chopped up hodge-podge state. Under these conditions, a Black State would be of doubtful value to Negroes living in those counties where the Negro is in a minority. Nor would Negroes living north of the Mason-Dixon Line gain any benefit from such an arrangement.

"The Black State would tend to intensify racial feeling and expose the Negro to a more vicious form of discrimination and segregation. Besides, a Black State could only be set up by armed force, and the existing Southern States would resist most strenuously.

"A Black State in the South based on counties or color, offers no solution to either the race or labor problems. The only sensible solution to the problem of the Negro in the South and elsewhere is one which will benefit all workers and tenant farmers, Negro and white, by getting rid of the yoke of exploitation which weighs heavily upon the necks of both. Such a solution would get support North and South. Such a solution is not only sensible but possible and practical."⁵

Criticism of the Communist Party: 1935-1939.¹

After the Seventh World Congress in 1935, the C.P. line underwent several notable changes, as the result of the impact of "changing objective

⁴Thomas, Human Exploitation, pp. 282-283.

⁵Crosswaith and Lewis, op. cit., pp. 35-36.

¹Thomas, After the New Deal, What? pp. 209-220.

conditions", as the Communist party declared.

Socialists have marvelled at the suddenness and unanimity with which the Communist International abandoned one line in September, 1935, at its Seventh World Congress, and adopted another. They have attributed these changes not to a "change in objective conditions", as Communists have asserted, but rather to a realization of the bankruptcy of their old line.²

Unfortunately, add the Socialists, the Comintern jumped from ultra-leftism to ultra-rightism. When the Seventh Congress quietly abandoned social-fascism, dual-unionism, and the united-front-from-below, it acted soundly. But in adopting a People's Front program, it fell into all the rightest errors of the discredited Social Democrats on the continent, substituting class-collaboration for class struggle policies.³

"The Seventh Congress of the Communist International marked one of the most far-reaching changes in policy in the entire history of the international labor movement. It abandoned a line of policy by which it had sworn for eight years. It endorsed concepts with which it had constantly warred against since its formation. And, this was accomplished without a single dissenting voice, with a unanimity which is at once admirable and damnable; for, one cannot help admiring a political machine which can, at a single stroke, reverse the course of a decade and leave the machine unimpaired, while at the same time condemning it for having stifled all independent thought and having left, not only all decisions, but all thought, in the hands of a small group of people -- in the last analysis, in the hands of a single person"4

" . . . As so frequently is the case, the pendulum made a swing from extreme left to extreme right. Having taken one step forward by revising its line, which had been false in the period preceding the Hitler victory, it took three steps backward with regard to its tactics on the issues arising from Hitler's victory. On the burning question of war, bourgeois democracy and fascism, and coalition governments, the Communist International today stands on the same ground as the extreme right wing of social democracy. And this, at a time when the socialist workers in large numbers had already begun to abandon these positions as having contributed to the defeat of the proletariat in Germany, Austria, and elsewhere!"5

²Thomas, Democracy versus Dictatorship, p. 20.

³Zam, "One Step Forward -- Three Steps Backward: The Seventh World Congress of the Third International," American Socialist Quarterly (November, 1935), Vol. IV, No. 3, pp. 45-54.

⁴Zam, op. cit., p. 45.

⁵Ibid., p. 49.

Commenting on the new line inaugurated by the Seventh World Congress, Norman Thomas, too, has expressed his amazement at the complete topay-turvy changed effected.

"The news of the amazing change in Communist tactics which comes from the Congress of the Third International in Moscow is scarcely surprising to those who have followed recent developments in Russia and elsewhere. It is nevertheless one of the most startling things in political history. It would be hard to imagine a more complete change in position since the former Congress of the Third International many years ago.

"How different might history have been in Germany and elsewhere if the Communists in good faith had announced their willingness to form a united front with working-class democratic parties to say nothing of the bourgeois parties which they now include in their grand alliance against Fascism. How many labor unions and political parties throughout the world have been hopelessly divided by a program which Communism now thoroughly repudiates at least on paper. . . ."⁶

"When Atheists or Protestants turn Catholic, they become more Catholic than the Pope himself. I don't know whether that is what happened to my Communist friends, or whether it is just a maneuver as some of my Socialist friends would have me believe, but, anyhow, there is certainly a change. It appears that Communists now go in for democracy in a big way, all over the country. They are all for democracy now, they are for the united front with everybody they can get Yes, it's good to have a people's front. But at what price? Can we afford to encourage the illusion that if you only go out and fight against something a miscellaneous crowd dislikes you win something? Wasn't that just the mistake with which we Socialists were charged: that we were too concerned with class collaboration in defending what we had and not enough concerned with winning something new and vital?"⁷

The Socialist party has accused the Communist party, in its new orientation of having abandoned Marxian fundamentals by: (1) defending bourgeois democracy ("Democracy versus Fascism"); (2) espousing the People's Front, which Socialists regard as a return to the discredited principles of class collaboration; (3) advocating collective security pacts with capitalist democratic governments as the formula for maintaining world peace.

In questions of strategy and tactics, the Socialist party has rejected; (1) the class-collaboration tactics arising from the Communist party's con-

⁶ Socialist Call, Aug. 3, 1935, p. 12.

⁷ Thomas and Browder, op. cit., p. 13.

ception of the People's Front; (2) the alleged opportunism of Communists in the trade unions; (3) the C.P.'s alleged support of any Farmer-Labor movement, however nebulous in principle, and regardless of its proponents.

In the organization of the C.P., the Socialist party has criticized: (1) its monolithism; (2) the absence of genuine party democracy; (3) the hypocrisy of its "self-criticism".

Finally, the Socialist party has taken the C.P. to task for its alleged lack of proletarian ethics.

Democracy versus Fascism.¹ The rise of the fascist movement has made the slogan of "democracy versus fascism" plausible, Socialists have admitted, but nevertheless false and dangerous. A clear-cut Marxian analysis would disclose, they have argued, that both democracy and fascism are different forms and stages of capitalism; fascism comes into being when capitalist democracy cannot maintain itself, and capitalism must accordingly resort to desperate measures, such as the destruction of the working class movements, the suppression of free speech and press, the stirring^{UP} of anti-semitism, etc. The S.P. has also pointed to past analyses of Communists (Earl Browder's Communism in the United States, p. 28, for example) wherein it is clearly, correctly, and emphatically pointed out that any attempt to counterpose capitalist democracy against fascism is false and misleading; that actually, capitalist democracy is the "mother of fascism", and never its destroyer.

Socialists affirm that the only true fight against fascism is the fight against capitalist democracy, its breeder, and that however attractive and palatable such a slogan as "democracy versus fascism" may be, it ultimately misleads the working class and tends to hasten rather than retard its defeat. They contend that the only correct slogan on which to wage a

¹ Thomas, Democracy versus Dictatorship, pp. 3-4, 19-21.

fight is "socialism versus capitalism".

"The second, in the unholy trinity in the bag of new tactics shown by the Seventh Congress, is the method of combating fascism by supporting -- bourgeois democracy.

" 'The choice is no longer between fascism and communism' declare the communists, 'it is between fascism and democracy.' For this reason they come out for democracy as the means of defeating fascism.

"This is a new tactic only for the communists. For if we look to Germany and to a lesser extent to Austria and Spain, we see that this is the tactic which was applied, and which failed. The stating of the alternative 'fascism or democracy' seems to imply that fascism is something which is independent of contemporary capitalism, expressing the decadence of capitalism as a system. There is no unbridgeable gap between fascism and bourgeois democracy. They are both children of capitalism. So long as capitalism exists, there is always the possibility of a 'growing' into fascism. The permanent elimination of the danger of fascism can be achieved only by the overthrow of capitalism and the beginning of the building of socialism. Therefore, for the period, it is absolutely correct to place the alternative: Fascism or Socialism. This does not mean refusal to defend the present democratic liberties, as the communists did in Germany, or to fail to undertake specific measures against the fascist danger. But all this work must fail if it does not have a perspective extending beyond the immediate struggle. That perspective must and can be only the placing of the proletariat into power."²

The People's Front.¹ Socialists have condemned the People's Front as a tactic diametrically opposite to the united-front-from-below, and equally unacceptable for different reasons. The latter spurned common action with all organizations (although it attempted to reach the rank-and-file of the S.P. over the heads of its leadership); the People's Front proposed common action with everybody who professed any opposition to fascism.

Socialists hold that it is too all-inclusive; that it is but another name for class collaboration, and that its basic evils still persist even when dressed up with a new name and employed by the Communist International instead of the Socialist International.² Their chief objection to it is that it involves joint action with non-working class, capitalist groups and

²Zam, op. cit., pp. 50-51.

¹Tyler, "People's Government versus Proletarian Dictatorship," American Socialist Monthly (March, 1936), Vol. V, No. 1, pp. 20-23.

²Thomas and Browder, op. cit., p. 34.

parties whose viewpoint is basically hostile to organized labor. Middle class groups can never be induced to enter into such agreements unless upon terms beneficial to themselves. Consequently the interests of the working class are sacrificed in People's Front deals. Such popular front agreements invariably involve the sacrifice of working class principles and often lead to negotiations with irresponsible and anti-working class figures like Father Divine of Harlem, who has been openly anti-union in his proclamations,³ and the endorsement of groups like the National Negro Congress, which adopted reactionary anti-working class resolutions.⁴

"It is becoming more and more evident that the Communist Party is through. When it adopted its fatal 'new line' and when it went chasing after will-o-the-wisp 'united fronts' with Tom, Dick and Harry, with any person or group that would listen to it, it signed its death-warrant."⁵

"There is essentially no distinction between People's Frontism of today and coalitionism of the past. Both depend on alliances with the capitalists to defeat fascism, both abandon the struggle for Socialism by operating on the basis of 'democracy versus fascism' rather than 'Socialism versus Capitalism'. Both, by championing the status quo as against a basic change in the social system make it possible for the fascists to rally the discontented and middle class elements and thereby provide fascism with a mass base. Like coalitionism, Popular Frontism therefore must inevitably fail because it offers no adequate defence against fascism, since it endeavors to maintain and rehabilitate a system which inevitably breeds fascism. Italy, Germany and Austria are living warnings against this method of combatting fascism."⁶

The approach of the People's Front can only have tragic results, the Socialist party has warned. It cannot unite the working class; it cannot gain the support of the middle class; it leads to war and the triumph of fascism. Such, in brief, is the indictment.⁷

³CROSSWAITH and Lewis, True Freedom for Negro and White Workers, pp. 36-37. Browder and Thomas, op. cit., pp. 13-17.

⁴Socialist Call, Feb. 15, 1936, pp. 4, 10.

⁵Berenberg, Socialist Call, April 4, 1936, p. 5.

⁶Socialist Handbook--1937, p. 27.

⁷Ibid., pp. 27-29. Haskell, "Popular Front--Middle Class Weapon," Socialist Review (July-August, 1938), Vol. VI, No. 7, pp. 8-10.

"THE PEOPLE'S FRONT STRATEGY"

"The policy of Popular Frontism is a political agreement between the working class and its political parties, on one hand, and the democratic capitalist parties, on the other hand, to defend the status quo against Fascist assault. Popularly put, the Popular Front policy maintains that when Fascism threatens, the working class must, for the time, give up the aggressive struggle for Socialism and take up the defensive struggle to hold on to democratic capitalism.

"The political consequences of such a policy is that the working class not only chains itself to a rotting capitalism but must also weaken its defense against Fascism.

"A. -- The Middle Class

"First, the working class loses all possibilities of winning the despairing middle class elements as an ally in the fight against reaction and capitalism. The middle class, obviously, cannot follow a group which instead of being the boldest opponent of an intolerable system has turned into one of the staunchest defenders of that system.

"As a defender of the present, a working class leadership which clings to Popular Frontism can only counsel: Patience! The impatient and despairing elements of a capitalist society in decay must turn away from such timidity in times of crisis. The policy of Popular Frontism drives the middle class to seek leadership from people who are -- against, not for the status quo.

"The Fascists know this and take advantage of it. They attempt to pose as the sole champions of the protesting elements. Popular Frontism strengthens the Fascist mass base.

"B. -- The Working Class

"Second, the ranks of the workers must be demoralized by the policy of Popular Frontism. The price of an alliance with the 'democratic' capitalist politicians is, of necessity, an agreement not to advance demands or undertake actions which will lose their friendship.

"In a period of capitalist expansion it might have been possible for the working class to make gains and put forward progressive demands, while the 'democratic' capitalists looked on with benevolent tolerance. But in the present period of capitalism, all sections of capital are unwilling to and sometimes unable to yield. The deeper the economic crisis, the less will capital yield.

"To hold the affection of the 'democratic' capitalist parties, the political parties of the working class, under Popular Frontism, must cease to press for most of the elementary working class demands. And should the workers spontaneously undertake militant action for their objectives, a working class leadership, tied to the maximum program of the democratic capitalist parties, must check and bridle every important action of the working class.

"The longer this process continues the weaker is the power of the working class, the less able is it to give effective resistance to Fascist gangs and a Fascist march for power.

"C. -- Treachery of 'Democrats'

"Lastly, the 'democratic' capitalists, who really make the program for

the Popular Front since any common minimum program cannot be beyond their maximum program, prove to be an almost worthless ally in the fight against reaction.

"Because these 'democrats' are first of all defenders of private property and capitalist rule they are unable to hit effective blows at either the economic or political bases of reaction.

"They can not destroy the economic bases of reaction. They will not shear reactionary finance capital of its power. They can not end the crises. They will not end those international wars or national chauvinism which are hot beds of Fascist development.

"They can not attack the political bases of reaction. The army officer corps, in every country a solid and often decisive base and ally of dictatorial reaction on a capitalist basis, can not be dislodged by the 'democratic' capitalists. To remove them means to arm the masses to do the job. When 'democratic' capitalists must decide between arming the workers or making an alliance with capitalist reaction, they have historically made their peace with the latter.

"The sum result of Popular Frontism: the Fascist movement grows; the working class loses allies and strength; the 'democratic' capitalist 'allies' paralyze the workers and pave the way for Fascist conquest of power."⁸

Socialists have further charged that the Communist International has even sanctioned a united front with the Fascists of Italy. In answer to the Daily Worker which had characterized such a statement as "a lie out of the whole cloth", the Socialist Call quoted the International Press Correspondence, an official C.P. publication, for August 22, 1936, to substantiate this contention.⁹

Organic Unity with C.P. In answer to the suggestions of the Communist party that both parties be politically united, Socialists have rejected this proposal. Although the S.P. has expressed its willingness to enter upon specific united front agreements with the Communist party from time to time for definite but limited purposes, it has declared that principled differences on fundamental questions make organic unity of both parties, even more so than a People's Front, entirely out of the question.¹

Norman Thomas has set forth the grounds for rejecting organic political

⁸ Socialist Call, Socialist Perspectives--1937, p. 3.

⁹ Socialist Call, Oct. 17, 1936, p. 8; Nov. 28, 1936, p. 12.

¹ Socialist Call, Dec. 7, 1935, p. 9; Feb. 20, 1937, p. 6; April 4, 1936, p. 5.

unity.

"These things explain why for the overwhelming majority of Socialists organic unity with the Communists is out of the question. A united front is logically another matter. It should leave each party free to seek to advance its own points of view where they differ. Under French conditions a united front has been found possible and so far useful. In America the question is different. By uniting Socialists and Communists in one political, nationwide front, we won't have enough strength to stop fascism. The question is, will such union help or hinder the education of workers toward socialism? A realistic view of the situation, in view of the important difference between us and the labor skepticism concerning communism, makes me believe such a united front would not be worth its cost. Better wait for a genuine inclusive farmer-labor party. Meanwhile let us go on with specific joint efforts in which Communists, Socialists and others work together to free Herndon, advance the Frazier-Lundeen bill and push labor organization and demonstrations. That we can do better rather than worse without slavishly trying to carry out a formula for a general political united front in forty-eight states and the nation."²

In summary, we may therefore note that the S.P. still holds genuine united-front agreements as the best solution for joint action among working class groups with differing political perspectives. It has steadfastly turned away from united-front-from-below maneuvers, People's Front agreements, and invitations for organic unity.

War Position.¹ Again recognizing that the C.P.'s position on war flows from its fundamental reorientation, the Socialist party has been most bitter in condemning the Communist right-about-face on the war question. The proposal that the "democracies" form collective security pacts to combat the "fascist aggressors" is regarded as a return to the errors of the pre-war Social Democratic parties of Europe.²

"In foreign affairs, People's Frontism counts on the support of democratic capitalist countries to stop fascist aggression and war, and relies on the League of Nations and collective security rather than upon the class struggle. Far from preventing war even temporarily People's Frontism becomes an instrument for preparing the masses to accept war. Since People's

²Thomas, "The Communists' New Line," New Republic (May 6, 1936), Vol. LXXXVI, No. 1118, p. 374.

¹Tyler, "People's Front Prepares for War," American Socialist Monthly (February, 1937), Vol. V, No. 9, pp. 38-43.

²Thomas, War As a Socialist Sees It, pp. 14-15. (For a criticism of collective security, see Socialist party position on war, supra.)

Frontism in power must assume responsibility for the defense of the democratic state against aggression, it promotes patriotism and class collaboration and inevitably becomes transformed into a national front, including even the patriotic fascist elements. Since in a People's Front government the working class is firmly tied to parties which defend and protect the foundations of capitalist society, no effective measures can be undertaken to destroy the bureaucracy and the armed forces as the pillars of capitalist control. The working class is denied the right to arm itself even for defensive purposes. The industrialists and financiers cannot be curbed, and the means of propaganda remain in their hands. Thus it is impossible to look upon the People's Front government as a transition government to Socialism."³

Socialists have attempted to explain this departure from the fundamental Marxist position as an effort on the part of Stalin to make the international working class movement subservient to his foreign policy, which, incidentally, they believe to be profoundly mistaken.⁴ They do not think that the threats to the Soviet Union's safety and security can be avoided by dependence upon the capitalist democracies. The complete isolation of the Soviet Union, its loss of prestige and its decline in power and influence, are all regarded as the inevitable results of attempting to maintain peace by strangling the international working class movement and trying to keep the capitalist democracies as allies by collective security pacts.

"The present position of the communists on war is by now so well known, that it is unnecessary to enter into any detailed analysis of it. In adopting this position, the Comintern repudiated its own finest traditions, the justification for its very foundation. Instead of an organ for 'world revolution', the Comintern has become an organ to induce the working class to support one side in an imperialist war. The tactic 'turn the imperialist war into a civil war' which gave Lenin and the Bolsheviks power in Russia is now being replaced by the tactics of coalition with the bourgeoisie, which eventually paved the way for Hitler in Germany."⁵

"Apparently the Communists have gone over wholeheartedly to the position that there may be good wars between nations. This was precisely the position of the majority of Socialists in 1914, a position which the Communists have bitterly decried. It was, moreover, a position that was intellectually far more credible in 1914 than it is now after we have seen the

³Socialist Handbook--1937, pp. 27-28.

⁴Thomas, Democracy versus Dictatorship, p. 20. Tyler, Youth Fights War, pp. 12-13.

⁵Zam, op. cit., p. 50.

lessons of the World War. There is no reason under the sun to think that international war will really be in any true sense anti-Fascist. Between capitalist nations it will be war for profit and power, and anti-Fascism will only be moral justification of it for popular consumption. . . .

"Just as the First World War, blessed by the majority of Socialists in every land except our own, did not destroy but spread imperialism, so would the second world war -- and don't forget that any war is likely to go into a world war -- blessed by official Communism in every land, be likely to spread Fascist reaction or dark night. . . .

"The old Communist belief in the inevitability of a second world war which would surely usher in a world revolution of the right sort was naive and dangerous, but not more naive and dangerous than this new position. It is one thing to defend Soviet Russia, it is another to swing over to this announced willingness to support a good war which by definition is a war of defense against Fascism. What constitutes defense is open to too many varying interpretations. Never should Socialists be more intent on making their anti-war position plain. We fight Fascism by strengthening and educating labor."⁶

The Socialist party has accused the Communist party of preparing the American workers to support an imperialist war against Japan and Germany on the theory that this will help the Soviet Union. Propaganda is being disseminated by the C.P. to make such a war popular.⁷ This war, Socialists assert, however idealistically motivated by the Communist party, in the last analysis will be fought for the defense of the interests of American industrialists and bankers who are utterly indifferent to the fate of the Soviet Union, but who would not object, for practical reasons, to saddle an idealistic ideology to their materialistic aspirations in China and South America.

In reviewing Earl Browder's book, What is Communism? Thomas disparaged the conception of the good war for democracy.

" . . . Mr. Browder might be more explicit, but he makes it reasonably clear that in order to defend Soviet Russia and oppose fascism, the United States should support League sanctions and, of course, logically prepare for war. He does not discuss the Franco-Soviet military pact and its implications for revolutionary socialism; he simply affirms its excellence. He praises, justly, much of Russia's foreign policy, but is silent on the Soviet sale of oil to Mussolini for war use and its implications. We Socialists who believe that the real enemy is capitalist nationalism, of which fascism is a stage; that capitalist United States will never go to war against Japan

⁶ Thomas, Socialist Call, Aug. 3, 1935, p. 12.

⁷ Socialist Call, May 7, 1938, p. 4.

or Germany for reasons of which Earl Browder should approve, but only for those which William Randolph Hearst will approve; that the minute we go to war we shall get fascism at home, regard the Communist new line on war as a dangerous reversion to the old European Socialist line of 1914 which the Communists once condemned in unmeasured terms. By the same token we fail to see the distinction between Earl Browder's people's front or farmer-labor reformist program, and the old German Social Democratic reformism in the absolute terms in which he sees it."⁸

Commenting upon the statements made by a spokesman for the Young Communist League who had affirmatively answered questions on his willingness to fight in the next war ("Do you believe in defending your country in case of war, would you fight?"), Socialists declared that the struggle against imperialist war traditionally carried on by the C.P. had come to a sorry end.

"Thus ended the struggle of the C.P. against war, and against imperialism. I may be naive, and simple, but I can draw absolutely no difference between the answer of the Y.C.L. to the questions on the national guard, the R.O.T.C. defense of the country, the Oxford Pledge, and the answers expected from an American Legionnaire, or a member of the war department.

"The Communist Party is for war, and will support American business interests abroad when they go to war. The Communist Party now can be expected to talk war, national defense, protection of American 'interests' along with the reactionaries, the red-baiters, and the militarist.

"Among the workers, the Communists can now be expected to call off the struggle against war.

"Among the youth, particularly the student youth where there has been a great anti-war movement in the past, the Y.C.L. can be expected to support the R.O.T.C. and to support the ends and purposes of the R.O.T.C.

"The answer of some old Communists may be, the role of 'our spokesman at Boston' was a maneuver. Not at all, it was the outspoken answer of what the Communists believe."⁹

Trade Union Opportunism. In trade union tactics, Socialists have accused the Communist party of suddenly abandoning its old line of fighting the A.F.L. and creating dual red unions affiliated to the Trade Union Unity League, in favor of a policy of conciliation with everyone under the banner of trade union unity.¹ Largely on account of these sudden shifts in policy,

⁸Thomas, "The Communists' New Line," New Republic (May 6, 1936), Vol. LXXXVI, No. 1118, p. 374.

⁹Al Hamilton, Socialist Call, Oct. 23, 1937, p. 6.

¹Browder and Thomas, op. cit., p. 33.

Socialists assert, Communists have not been trusted in the labor movement; workers cannot easily forget the past.

" . . . The Daily Worker may not like it, but it is nevertheless true: communists are disliked and distrusted in the labor movement. They are disliked and distrusted not because of what the Hearst press says either about them, or about Soviet Russia, but of what they have done to the labor movement. A party cannot for more than fifteen years conduct a war of extermination against the entire labor movement, specializing in character assassination, disrupting everything, breaking up what they could, organizing dual unions and splitting the ranks of the workers, even at times when they were involved in bitter struggles against their bosses, and then suddenly come out and say: Well, that's over, we won't do it again! Not because we are wrong, not because we have changed our program, but just so. We won't do it again. Henceforth we will be good!

"It will take more than a declaration for the communists to regain the confidence of the labor and socialist movement. . . ."²

Socialists have further maintained that in carrying the People's Front into the trade unions, the Communist party has, in some instances, made shady deals with opportunist elements to retain control of specific locals, or to keep more militant trade unionists with class struggle policies from gaining control; that its policies have been reactionary, with its full strength directed against the left-wing elements rather than the more conservative, anti-socialist bureaucracies in control of many unions;³ that in all instances the policies of the unions have been made subservient to the political needs and interests of the Communist party.⁴

"When Communists have been able to entrench themselves in the governing posts of a union they have robbed it of its independence. They have made the interests of the union membership secondary to the aims of the Communist party. That these aims may sometimes be worthy ones, and that they may temporarily coincide with the aims of labor as a whole, do not justify the control of a union by an outside political group.

"Once in control of a union it is the common practice of Communists to wipe out all effective opposition, even if this means falsely blackening the character of their opponents. A communist-controlled union may preserve the forms of democracy, but the practice of democracy is lost. . . .

" . . . No group of professional disrupters could be more reckless than

²Zam, op. cit., pp. 9-10.

³Socialist Handbook--1937, p. 47.

⁴Socialist Call, Sept. 3, 1938, p. 9.

have been the agents of the Communist party in branding those whom they could not control as wreckers, red-baiters, company men, and stoolpigeons."⁵

The National Executive Committee of the Socialist Party used strong words in condemning trade union tactics of the Communists:

"Socialists will fight for unity and industrial unionism, without, however, forming solid blocs with bureaucrats and untrustworthy elements to do it. (We have in mind, specifically, unions where Communists have joined hands with gangster and racketeer elements, defending them and keeping them in office, just because they mumble phrases about 'industrial unionism'.)."6

Labor Party.¹ On the Labor party question, according to Socialist criticism, the C.P. also done handspings. Never opposing a Labor party in principle, the C.P. nevertheless wanted a labor party "from below" prior to 1935, but since that date it has been willing to accept any movement which calls itself a Labor party.

"Originally, Communists proposed a 'rank and file' labor party, 'from below'. Now they seem to be working for any kind of a 'labor party', no matter what discredited politicians of old parties may control it, just so long as it is called 'labor party'.

"Obviously the Socialist Party can not join in every one of these adventurist enterprises in 'labor party' excursions. We most certainly do not agree on agitational slogans for a labor party such as the Communists raise. We consider preachments about a labor party being a people's front and removing the dangers of war and fascism, to be wrong, misleading and dangerous. A Labor party would mark a new level of political class consciousness and united action on the political field by the working class. But it would not, in so doing, insure the establishment of peace or democracy or plenty.

"The concept of the messianic mission of a labor party can only lead to the ultimate liquidation of a revolutionary party."²

"The question inevitably arises whether war and fascism can be averted by the formation of an amorphous 'Labor Party', composed of a thousand disparate elements pulling in as many different directions? Does not the con-

⁵Idem.

⁶Socialist Call, Feb. 20, 1937, p. 6.

¹Laidler, Toward a Farmer-Labor Party, pp. 50-53. Berenberg, "A Labor Party," American Socialist Monthly (May, 1936), Vol. V, No. 3, pp. 3-4. National Convention, Socialist Party, U.S.A., "Socialist Resolution on the Labor Party," Socialist Call, May 7, 1938, p. 9.

²Socialist Call, Feb. 20, 1937, p. 6.

cept of the People's Front border on class collaboration? Can a party so inclusive as the People's Front do anything effective in realizing even a mild program of reforms? Or will it not bow down under the weight of its own contradictions? Does not the present position of the Communist Party on the question of the Labor Party constitute a surrender of all revolutionary realism, and does it not commit the Communist Party to the same sterile reformism for which it has, justly, condemned the German Social Democracy? Is not a good offense the best defense in the class struggle? Is not the position of the Communist Party, in putting the emphasis on the defense of civil liberties and of democracy defeatist?"³

Communist Party Organization. The Socialist party has rejected the monolithism of the Communist movement. It has declared that this type of organization degenerates into despotic rule by a leadership which utterly disregards the will of the general membership in carrying out its own pre-conceived notions of what the party line should be. Monolithism leads to party dictatorship by those who entrench themselves at the top of the party organization.

" . . . In its devotion to the theory of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat', which was obviously meant to give the workers political and economic power in the transition from capitalism to socialism, it has fallen into the error of exalting dictatorship for its own sake. It has destroyed democratic discussion within its own ranks. It has expelled all members who did not accept the 'party line'. It has, in the classic case of Lovestone, permitted the Comintern to reverse, by cablegram, without hearing, the vote of ninety per cent of the delegates of a national convention, and to force upon it a leadership which it had itself repudiated. It has done these things in the name of 'discipline', and for the ideal of a 'monolithic' party. A monolithic party seems to be a party with but one thought, one voice, one direction."¹

" . . . Since we do not believe in the infallibility of leaders, we are compelled to arrive at our policies by permitting a wide divergence of opinion and freest discussion within the party by our rank and file.

"This is a basic feature which distinguishes the Socialist Party from the Communist Party."²

Socialists hold that a monolithic organization and genuine party democracy are incompatible. Consequently, they affirm, members of the Communist party take very little part in formulating changes in the party line or in

³Berenberg, op. cit., pp. 3-4.

¹Berenberg, "The Bankruptcy of American Communism," American Socialist Quarterly (December, 1934), Vol. III, No. 4, p. 39.

²Socialist Call, Feb. 20, 1937, p. 6.

the adoption of new policies; their sole function consists in giving their approval to accomplished facts or in discussing the means of implementing the line handed down by the Communist International or the National Committee of the party. Although the Constitution of the Communist party affirms the existence of democracy, the Socialist party holds that only the form of democracy exists within the C.P., but not the fact.

In his debate with Browder, Thomas hit at this alleged absence of democracy within the C.P. He declared:

"I am a Socialist, because, while we struggle toward that end, which we have not reached as yet, we need democracy within the party. It may stumble and it may fail from time to time, but I trust the democracy of a party more than I trust a rule from on top, a centralization so great that orders are handed down from Moscow as in fact they have been handed down since the formation of the Third International, so that some of you have been made rather dizzy changing your minds to keep up with the correct line."³

Socialists have never taken seriously the "self-criticism" of the Communist party. They hold that the criticism which takes place is not directed at the fundamentals of the party line, but rather at the method of carrying it out; that in the last analysis self-criticism is an attempt to make the rank-and-file of the C.P. feel an inability to do justice to the line, and not to examine it critically and evaluate it.

"In this respect, it is true, we differ from the Communist Party. We do not conduct merely formal post-mortem discussions by expelling all those who disagree with the existing party leadership, in order to assure the right kind of a majority."⁴

"Communists are very sensitive to the charge that in their organization, in their discipline and in their practices they resemble the Jesuit Order. Nowhere is this resemblance so clear as in the institution of self-criticism. Self-criticism is spoken of as an 'art', like the art of prayer. It is as formal as the confession, and is accompanied, as is the confession, by the cry 'Mea culpa -- mea maxima culpa! I have sinned.'

"Self-criticism chiefly functions to advertise the individual Communist's realization that he is not perfect. The norm of perfection is the 'general line' of the party. He measures his 'deviations' from the line

³Thomas and Browder, op. cit., p. 8.

⁴Socialist Call, Feb. 20, 1937, p. 6.

with smug consciousness of well-doing, he publicly announces his sin, his realization of it, and his intention to do better. Never does self-criticism involve any doubt of the 'general line', any more than a Catholic's confession involves any doubt of church dogma.

"Self-criticism never becomes free discussion. The leaders of the party practice 'self-criticism', but who criticizes them? Who in the party dares to criticize Stalin, or the Executive of the Comintern?"⁵

Lack of Proletarian Ethics. Socialists have deplored the alleged lack of integrity shown by the Communist party in dealing with other working class movements which have also professed ^{the} classless society as their goal but have disagreed with the strategy and tactics employed by the Communist International. Instead of frankly acknowledging that the differences of opinion, however mistaken, are honest, Socialist and other groups have been denounced as enemies of the working class, social-fascists, Franco's Fifth Column, etc. And what is even worse, the S.P.'s doctrines have been deliberately misrepresented and distorted, Socialists have alleged. Such Machiavellian tactics have no place in a Marxian movement.⁶

⁵ Berenberg, op. cit., pp. 47-48.

⁶ Thomas, America's Way Out, p. 92. Laidler, Socializing Our Democracy, p. 97.

CHAPTER XII

THE SOCIALIST PARTY: CRITICISM OF OTHER MARXIAN MOVEMENTS

Criticism of Socialist Labor Party

Current Socialist party literature does not give even a passing mention to the Socialist Labor party. Since Socialists regard the latter as comparatively obscure, unknown, and above all, without any following in the ranks of the working class, they have, for the most part, ignored the S.L.P. Socialists still believe that time has vindicated their early criticisms of the Socialist Labor party. They tend to dismiss the entire movement in a few words.

" . . . The Socialist Labor Party is a tiny religious sect of those who keep pure the faith once for all delivered to Karl Marx as interpreted by his prophet, Daniel de Leon. . . ."¹

On the whole, the basic differences which separate the S.P. from the S.L.P. are four in number: (1) The Socialist party has opposed from the very beginning the dual-union conceptions of the S.L.P. Socialists do not believe that rival revolutionary unions should be set up in opposition to the basic trade unions, however conservative and archaic, to which workers already belong. Socialists believe it is their duty to work within these unions for the adoption of more progressive policies.² (2) Socialists have rejected the underlying assumptions of the S.L.P.'s strategy in spurning a program of "immediate demands". Cognizant that such demands may become ends rather than means, Socialists have nevertheless held that their espousal gets workers interested in the movement, develops their class-consciousness,

¹ Thomas, America's Way Out, p. 284.

² Laidler, History of Socialist Thought, p. 571.

and prepares them for active participation in the struggle for the overthrow of the capitalist system. (3) Socialists have rejected the monolithic organization of the S.L.P., its "fanatic rigidity of discipline", and its complete domination by the top leadership.³ The aversion of Socialists in recent years for greater centralization of power in the hands of the S.P.'s National Executive Committee has been traced by one prominent member of the party to a reaction against the baneful tyranny of Daniel De Leon.⁴

(4) Finally, Socialists have argued, the Socialist Labor party is unique neither in its demand for industrial organization nor in its advocacy of the General Strike. But the Socialist industrial union cannot be an adequate substitute for the state. The transition to the new society cannot be accomplished by the mere dissolution of the state after a victory by the workers over the bourgeoisie at the polls. The new society needs both the Socialist industrial union and some supreme coercive force, the state, to assure its retention of power.⁵

Criticism of Social Democratic Federation.¹

Since the split in the Socialist party and the bolting of the Old Guard Socialists in 1936 to form the Social Democratic Federation the following year, little direct criticism of the latter group has appeared in the Socialist party press. For a discussion of issues and implied criticisms, the reader is referred to the history of the Socialist party from 1932 to 1936.²

In December, 1938, negotiations were undertaken looking forward to a

³Hillquit, History of Socialism in the United States, pp. 339-340. Laidler, Socialism in Thought and Action, p. 502.

⁴Porter, Which Way for the Socialist Party? p. 38.

⁵Thomas, The Socialist Cure for a Sick Society, p. 20; America's Way Out, p. 213.

¹Thomas, After the New Deal. What? pp. 220-228.

²Supra.

reunification of the Socialist party and the Social Democratic Federation.³

Criticism of the Lovestone Group (Independent Labor League of America)

The Socialist party has given an insignificant recognition to the Lovestone movement in its party press and other literature. Up until approximately 1937, when the Lovestone group abandoned all hopes of effecting a reconciliation with the Communist party, the Socialist party generally regarded the Lovestoneites ". . . as pawns playing the Communist party game, seemingly outside the party but pulling its chestnuts out of the fire."¹

Socialists so expressed themselves because of Lovestone's alleged practices of differing from the Comintern theory but supporting it in practice. The S.P. was especially critical of the Lovestone group at the time the Communist party changed its line in 1935. At that time the Lovestoneites were accused of playing a further opportunistic role to effect conciliation with the Communist party.²

Since 1937, however, despite differences in strategy, tactics, and party organization, despite some disagreements on the war question,³ the Socialist party and the Lovestone group have taken more or less similar positions on the People's Front, collective security, and the labor party. Both parties are affiliated to the Keep American Out of War Committee.

³ Socialist Call, Dec. 24, 1938, p. 4.

¹ Socialist Call, Nov. 7, 1936, p. 5.

² Socialist Call, Feb. 8, 1936, p. 6.

³ Zam, " 'Fools Rush In', " American Socialist Monthly (July, 1936), Vol. V, No. 5, pp. 18-20.

Socialist Party's Criticism of the Socialist Workers Party (Trotskyists)

The facts relating to the admission of the Trotskyists into the Socialist party in 1936 and their subsequent expulsion the following year have been presented elsewhere.¹ A few words will be said here concerning the attitude taken by the Socialists toward the Trotskyists since their expulsion from the party.

Socialists have attributed the expulsion not to fundamental differences of policy but to the inability of Trotskyists to work harmoniously with any group which does not see eye-to-eye with them on every question which arises. Trotskyists, says the S.P., are sectarians just like the members of the Communist party.²

"The lasting fact is that the Trotskyites were unable to remain in the American Socialist Party as they have been unable to remain in all the other revolutionary, but non-Trotskyite, organizations in the world.

"The Stalinists acclaim that it is the counter-revolutionary program of the Trotskyites that has caused this. Scarcely! The Trotsky program is less counter-revolutionary than that of the Stalinists.

"What lies beneath the split in the SP is not that which separates the Trotskyites from the Stalinists but that which united them.

"The Trotskyites, like the Stalinists, have that sectarian approach to politics which causes them to idolize all those who agree with their narrow program at any given moment and to cast into the nether depths of 'counter-revolution' all those who disagree with them.

"The Trotskyites refuse to be in a party with those who are not 'consistent revolutionists'. And all those who are not Trotskyites are not such 'consistent revolutionists'.

"The Trotskyites may temporarily join with non-Trotskyites in a party; but only as a 'maneuver'; and never to mold a stable party.

"The Trotskyite belief that all non-Trotskyites are 'centrists' and 'reformists' is supplemented by the conclusion that all such 'confused' elements will join with the class enemy in time of crisis. On this assumption, Trotskyism like Stalinism conducts a factional quarrel within the working class with the weapons and in the manner of a class struggle.

"The consequences of this policy are, prior to a working class revolution, splits and splits; and after a successful revolution, as in Russia, bureaucratic suppressions.

"The sectarian notion that all those without the perfect line are con-

¹ Supra.

² Socialist Call, Jan. 14, 1939, p. 3.

scious or unconscious counter-revolutionaries, 'Trotsky-Fascists' or 'Spanish assassins', must ultimately lead to the institution of a bureaucratic regime by such a sectarian group in power.

"Trotskyism and Stalinism, arch-enemies in program, are nevertheless children born of one womb.

"For about six months it appeared that the Trotskyites, after the lessons of more than a decade, would change their line; this was during that period when the Trotskyites were dissolving their pure parties and entering the Socialist Parties of the world. Out of these parties, we hoped would come united revolutionary -- as opposed to reformist -- currents within them.

"The test of time has found the Trotskyites wanting in an ability to learn from the lessons of history. The single party dictatorship, instead of a proletarian dictatorship resting on workers' democracy, still remains their link with Stalinism. As in the Communist parties, the single-man dictatorship is their method of leadership and policy-making."³

Despite their disillusionment (rightly or wrongly so) with the Trotskyists, Socialists have nevertheless denounced the attempts to fasten Fascist-collaboration upon Trotsky by the Moscow trials. They have also demanded that the right of asylum granted to Trotsky by the Mexican government be applauded and upheld by the working class.⁴

³Socialist Call, Sept. 11, 1937, p. 4.

⁴Socialist Call, Dec. 26, 1936, p. 12.

CHAPTER XIII

THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC FEDERATION

History

The Social Democratic Federation of the U.S.A. was formally organized in May, 1937 in a convention held at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and attended by delegates from Socialist organizations in 19 states.¹

The formation of the Social Democratic Federation marked the climax of a long and bitter internal struggle between the Old Guard and the Militants for control of the Socialist party. The immediate cause was the refusal of the Socialist Party Convention in session at Cleveland in May, 1936, to seat the Old Guard delegation from New York, headed by Louis Waldman, which contested the seating of the Militants from that state. When the Convention decided the issue in favor of the latter, the Old Guard delegates from New York, followed by other delegates, bolted the convention and took the first steps towards setting up the new S.D.F. organization.² Actually, however, the causes of the split went much farther back.

Detroit Declaration--1934.³ The split was the final outcome of a controversy within the party on questions of policy and tactics, dating back a number of years. One of the first significant and disturbing signs of this division came when a fight arose over the adoption of the Declara-

¹ Social Democratic Federation, U.S.A., Principles and Program, p. 3.

² New Leader, May 16, 1936, p. 1; May 23, 1936, p. 1; May 30, 1936, pp. 1, 8; June 6, 1936, *passim*; June 13, 1936, pp. 1, 3, 7. New York Times, May 25, 1936, p. 1; June 4, 1936, p. 1.

³ Solomon, Detroit and the Party, *passim*. Committee for the Preservation of the Socialist Party, The Crisis in the Socialist Party--The Detroit Convention, *passim*.

tion of Principles introduced at the Detroit Convention in June, 1934.

The greatest dissension was caused by the last three paragraphs of the 1500 word Declaration,⁴ which, in part, read:

"The Socialist Party is opposed to militarism, imperialism and war. It purposes to eradicate the perpetual economic warfare of capitalism the fruit of which is international conflict. War cannot be tolerated by Socialists, or preparedness for war. . . . They will meet war and the detailed plans for war already mapped out by the war-making arms of the government, by massed war resistance, organized so far as practicable in a general strike of labor unions and professional groups in a united effort to make the waging of war a practical impossibility and to convert the capitalist war crisis into a victory for Socialism.

"In its struggle for a new society, the Socialist Party seeks to attain its objectives by peaceful and orderly means. . . . Its methods may include a recourse to a general strike which will not merely serve as a defense against Fascist counter-revolution but will carry the revolutionary struggle into the camp of the enemy.

"The Socialist Party proclaims anew its faith in economic and political democracy, but it unhesitatingly applies itself to the task of replacing the bogus democracy of capitalist parliamentarianism by a genuine workers' democracy. Capitalism is doomed. If it can be superseded by a majority vote, the Socialist Party will rejoice. If the crisis comes through the denial of majority rights after the electorate has given us a mandate we shall not hesitate to crush by our labor solidarity the reckless forces of reaction and to consolidate the Socialist state. If the capitalist system should collapse in a general chaos and confusion, which can not permit of orderly procedure, the Socialist Party, whether or not in such a case it is a majority, will not shrink from the responsibility of organizing and maintaining a government under the workers' rule. True democracy is a worthy means to progress; but true democracy must be created by the workers of the world."⁵ (This writer's emphasis.)

The objections of the Old Guard centered chiefly about the underscored passages. Louis Waldman opened the fight against its adoption. He strenuously opposed the use of "massed war resistance":

" . . . 'Massed war resistance' is one of those provocative phrases which is capable of all kinds of construction. What does a political party dedicated to lawful and peaceful struggle mean when it declares itself dedicated to the use of mass war resistance if it does not mean extra-legal means?"

"For myself, comrades, it is inconceivable to me that I can remain a Social Democrat and become bound by this declaration, . . ."

" . . . If we have to adjourn without a declaration I would a thousand

⁴The Declaration of Principles together with a full stenographic report on the debate for and against its adoption can be found in the American Socialist Quarterly (July, 1934), Vol. III, Special Supplement.

⁵Ibid., pp. 5-6.

times rather do that than commit the Socialist Party to an anarchist, illegal, and communistic doctrine."⁶

Algernon Lee later affirmed the anti-Declaration sentiments of Waldman and others when he declared:

"To adopt this will not do one bit toward assuring that you will have massed war resistance or a general strike or anything of the sort. You do not get that sort of thing by adopting a resolution in a convention. But to adopt this today will, in the first place, be to put a conclusive argument in the hands of every District Attorney in the states that have criminal syndicalism laws, criminal anarchist laws, or whatever they call them, and even in other states, to send to prison men who will have to stand the gaff, but who have not voted on this today. I do not see why we should, for no purpose, invite that danger."⁷

Despite these and other objections offered by Waldman, Lee, Solomon, Panken and others, the delegates adopted the Declaration of Principles by a vote of 99 to 47, with the further proviso that the Declaration be submitted to the party membership for a referendum vote.⁸ Preparatory to the referendum, the New Leader devoted several issues to discussions, pro and con, upon the Declaration.⁹

The vote subsequently taken in the fall showed that the sentiment of the S.P. was for the Declaration of Principles but not overwhelmingly so. It was carried by a vote of 5,993 to 4,872.¹⁰

This referendum on the Detroit Declaration settled nothing. Smoldering discontents continued to flare up anew. The controversy which raged in varying intensity throughout the country found its greatest and most acri-

⁶Ibid., pp. 8-9.

⁷Ibid., pp. 22-23.

⁸Ibid., p. 2.

⁹New Leader, June 16th and June 23rd, 1934, passim.

¹⁰New Leader, Oct. 27, 1934, p. 6.

monious expression in New York State where the Old Guard's control of the State Central Committee was being threatened by the growing strength of the Militants. The provocative issues were these: (1) Should the Socialist party attempt to be an "all-inclusive" party by admitting to membership Communist expatriates who had been expelled for non-conformity with the Communist party line; (2) should Socialists undertake to cooperate in united front agreements with the Communist party; (3) should the Socialist party depart from its traditional position of strict adherence to constitutional measures for achieving socialism? The Old Guard answered all these questions negatively.

Harmony Pact--1935. In an effort to quiet the threats and counter-threats of secessions, and expulsions, the National Executive Committee presented to the New York State Committee a nine-point harmony program as the minimum basis for reaching an agreement for keeping both factions together within the party. The following were the most important planks:

"1. The adherence to the resolution of the NEC providing the ineligibility of advocates of violence and communism in the party."

"2. That the State Committee prepare and issue a statement setting forth its views that while holding to the right of Socialists to advocate changes in the Declaration of Principles, the same must be accepted as the duly and legally adopted Declaration of Principles as provided in the National Constitution."

"3. That the local, state and national constitutions shall be rigidly enforced."

"5. That every party member, party committees and papers published by Socialists shall be forbidden from making or issuing public statements attacking the integrity of comrades, the party, or its duly constituted committees, and provisions made for disciplining actions to enforce same."¹

The nine-point harmony program evoked considerable discussion;² a compromise program, substantially similar to that proposed by the NEC in March,

¹ Socialist Call, March 30, 1935, p. 6.

² New Leader, May 11, 1935, p. 7; June 15, 1935, p. 3; June 29, 1935, p. 5.

1935, was finally agreed upon by a majority of the New York State Committee and the NEC.³

Militant Bolt--1935. Despite this "harmony" pact, rumors and threats of Left Wing expulsion continued to reach the non-party press.⁴ The harmony, in fact, proved to be short-lived. The meeting of the New York City Central Committee on December 4, 1935, at the Rand School, led to a definite parting of the ways. The facts are few and simple, but considerable differences of opinion have arisen in their interpretation. At the December 4th meeting, the N.Y.C. Central Committee controlled by the Old Guard, by a vote of 48 to 44 refused to reconsider a previous decision for a "reorganization" of the party. The Militants, interpreting this as the first steps in the ouster of Norman Thomas and the Left Wing, bolted the meeting and subsequently established themselves at the headquarters of the Socialist Call, the recently established Militant paper.⁵ Steps were thereupon taken by the Militants to make a state-wide fight upon the issue. Prompt reprisal followed. The New York State Committee, also controlled by the Old Guard, declared the seceders an "outlaw organization".⁶

Two statements in juxtaposition show the almost hopelessly irreconcilable attitudes taken by the warring factions. The Militants justified their exodus thus:

"The action of the Old Guard in insisting on the so-called 'reorganization' of the Party forced the issue. No self-respecting Socialist could have submitted to the high-handed dictatorship usurped by the Old Guard

³New Leader, July 20, 1935, p. 3. Socialist Call, July 20, 1935, pp. 809.

⁴New York Times, Aug. 6, 1935, p. 18; Nov. 15, 1935, p. 8.

⁵New Leader, December 7, 1935, p. 2; December 14, 1935, p. 3. Socialist Call, December 14, 1935, pp. 2,6,12.

⁶New York Times, December 9, 1935, p. 8.

executive committee of Local New York. No self-respecting Socialist did submit. When by a vote of 48 to 44 the Central Committee refused to reconsider the ousting of Norman Thomas and of the left-wing elements -- and, make no mistake, the contemplated 'reorganization' meant expulsion! -- the self-respecting Socialists, of all shades of opinion, walked out of the meeting."

"And so opens a new era of Socialist activity. Now the party in New York will carry out the policies of the executive committee. Now young people will be admitted when they are eligible. Now there will be a positive policy of Socialist activity in the unions. Now there will be true democracy within the party. Now there will be no heresy-hunting and witch-burning."⁷

The Old Guard, on the other hand, declared:

"Socialist Party members should be on their guard against wild statements that are certain to come from the 'militant' secessionists in Local New York. They appear to have ample funds from mysterious sources and for a year they have been more and more acting like the Communist 'left' wing in the party in 1919. They have reached the stage of demanding the right to advocate armed insurrection, which clearly places them in the category of Communists.

"Socialist Party members will stand adamant against these naive pseudo-revolutionists who for many weeks have had the 'Daily Worker' as their open advocates

"Party members should also be on their guard against the Communist plants who have slipped into the party and are serving as the active advisors of the 'militant' insurrectionists

"The Socialist Party will not tolerate the infantile Communists in the party and their secession allies. Make sure of that!"⁸

New York Referendum--1936. The seriousness of the situation -- the existence of two Socialist parties in New York State -- resulted in almost immediate action on the part of the National Executive Committee. By a vote of 8 to 2, a resolution was passed suspending the charter of the New York State party; appointing of a temporary state committee of 15; providing for a state referendum to determine the preference of the membership on the rival factions in New York.¹

The Militants interposed no objections to the proposed referendum. The

⁷ Socialist Call, Dec. 14, 1935, p. 6.

⁸ New Leader, December 7, 1935, p. 2.

¹ Socialist Call, Jan. 11, 1936, p. 3.

Old Guard, however, was indignant at the action.² It characterized these proceedings as high-handed, and "fascism in the party".³ Bold headlines in the New Leader declared: "Left Wingers in the N.E.C. Try To Force Dictatorship On the Party In New York".⁴

The referendum was held on April 2, 1936. Nominees of both factions for members of the State Executive Committee and delegates to the National Convention in June, 1936 were offered to the regularly enrolled Socialists for their decision. The result was an overwhelming victory for the Militants throughout the state. In New York City, the Militants captured 20 out of the 24 delegates to the National Convention. Most of the Old Guard leaders (Oneal, Waldman, Gerber, Classens, Lee, Panken, Karlin) were defeated in their home districts.⁵ The Militants also elected most of the State Committeemen. As a result of this referendum, the National Executive Committee of the party awarded the New York charter to the Militants.⁶

National Convention--1936. The last move made by the Old Guard to save itself came at the 1936 National Convention of the Socialist party. Strenuous efforts were made to gain recognition as the accredited New York delegation, despite the fact that it had been repudiated at the referendum previously held. Failing in this move, the Old Guard delegates from New York and elsewhere bolted the Convention and took the first steps towards the formation of the Social Democratic Federation.¹

Postscript--1939. About December, 1938, negotiations were undertaken

²New Leader, Jan. 11, 1936, pp. 1-3.

³Ibid., p. 2.

⁴Idem.

⁵Socialist Call, April 11, 1936, p. 2.

⁶New Leader, May 16, 1936, p. 2.

¹New Leader, May 16, 1936, p. 1; May 23, 1936, p. 1; May 30, 1936, pp. 1,8; June 6, 1936, passim; June 13, 1936, pp. 1,3,7. New York Times, May 25, 1936, p. 1; June 4, 1936, p. 1.

by the Social Democratic Federation and the Socialist party with a view to determining whether or not a genuine basis existed for the re-unification of both organizations.

As the New Leader observed:

"We presume that no one will object to a united movement that is based upon a real understanding and embodied in decisions that leave no room for two or more interpretations. The split was due to basic issues of democracy in the party and democracy in methods, policies, programs, philosophy and aims of the Socialist movement. If we are now all democratic Socialists there should be little difficulty in clearly stating these views without equivocation. . . ."²

Viewpoints for³ and against⁴ the proposal were presented in the columns of the New Leader. Julius Gerber expressed his doubts and misgivings on the efficacy of such a plan. He doubted that the leaders of the S.P. had experienced any change of heart; on the whole he regarded this as an attempt on their part to regain prestige which had been lost by the disintegration of the S.P.⁵

Principles of Socialism

The general orientation of the Social Democratic Federation was set forth at an earlier date by Hillquit and other Socialists.¹ Like the Socialist party, the S.D.F. has taken no official stand on Marxism. In its ranks are to be found "orthodox" Marxist followers of Kautsky, "revisionists", and non-Marxian socialists. In general, it is anti-Leninist

²New Leader, Jan. 14, 1939, p. 8.

³Idem.

⁴New Leader, Feb. 4, 1939, p. 8.

⁵Idem.

¹Hillquit, Present Day Socialism: Foundations of Socialism, Claessens, Essentials of Socialism. Panken, Socialism for America. Lewis, Mission of the Social Democratic Federation. New Leader, May 30, 1936, p. 1.

(opposing "violence, terror and the proletarian dictatorship" as the road to power);² it has espoused a democratic conquest of power through the established constitutional means.³ On the whole, it has followed the traditions and viewpoints of the Social Democracies affiliated to the Second International, strongly leaning towards Kautsky in its theoretical analyses.

"There are two principal viewpoints on social change. The Communist and left wing dream of an impending catastrophe, a rapid or sudden collapse of Capitalism and the possible revolt of the masses in 'chaos and confusion', a contempt for democracy and a deep distrust in the abilities and potentialities of the common mass. These ultra 'revolutionists' care only for a small highly disciplined crew who are to occupy strategic positions and manipulate the revolting masses under a party dictatorship which they euphonistically call the 'dictatorship of the proletariat'. All those who oppose these self-appointed saviors are to be ruthlessly exterminated.

"The viewpoint of the Social Democrats, so powerfully represented by the Socialist and Labor parties of Great Britain, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Czechoslovakia, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, Finland, Argentina, Australia, New Zealand and other countries, is one of implicit faith in the abilities and potentialities of the masses and in the efficacy of democratic progress. The tactics of Social Democracy are in consonance with their philosophy. Social Democrats have organized or have helped to organize powerful mass political parties. They built or helped to build strong and militant trade unions. They have organized or aided in the organization of successful co-operative enterprises."⁴

Strategy and Tactics

The Social Democratic Federation has a definite program for building the trade unions, fighting for the realization of the immediate needs of workers as producers and consumers, conserving the natural resources of the United States, etc.¹ It has advanced the proposition that the most fruitful approach for ultimately winning the masses to accepting a socialist society lies in the building of a national Farmer-Labor party, rooted basic-

² New Leader, June 8, 1935, p. 7; July 6, 1935, p. 7; Sept. 10, 1935, p. 7.

³ Adler, Democracy and Revolution, pp. 22-23.

⁴ Social Democratic Federation U.S.A., Principles and Program, p. 4.

¹ Ibid., pp. 10-14.

ally in the trade unions. On the question of the ultimate transition to socialism it favors compensation to the present owners of the instruments of production (factories, mines, etc.) rather than outright confiscation.²

Kautsky has stated the generally accepted position in the columns of the New Leader:

"It is stupid as well as politically harmful to come out with a program for complete confiscation, for not only are the capitalists tied up with the present form of private property, but also hundreds of thousands of 'little' men, who have their roots in the working class."³

The chief function to-day of the S.D.F., as the organization conceives it, is to act as an educational society, to crystallize anti-capitalist sentiment, and to help build the Farmer-Labor party which must aim to destroy capitalism and substitute a new society based upon socialist principles.

"The Social Democratic Federation of the U.S.A. is an alliance of state organizations, some functioning as political parties, as for example the Socialist party in Pennsylvania and in Connecticut with their municipal administrations in Reading and Bridgeport; in other states Social Democrats are members of Labor parties or are helping to organize Labor parties, as for example, the American Labor Party of New York, the Farmer-Labor Party of Minnesota and Labor's Non-Partisan League elsewhere. In these latter states Social Democrats maintain their organization as Socialist educational and propaganda societies and faithfully contribute their energies to the Labor political parties."⁴

"The mission of the Social Democratic Federation is to serve as an educational agency in explaining the causes that led to the establishment of the systems of the past; to define their characteristics and superiority over the preceding system and to point out the inability of capitalism to guarantee security and such opportunities as will fulfill the program of our Declaration of Independence in its claim that 'all men' have the right to 'Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness'."⁵

Labor Party. Since no national Labor or Farmer-Labor party appeared upon the scene in 1936, the attitude of the S.D.F. (although formally organized the following year) can best be understood by observing what its

²Ibid., p. 14.

³New Leader, Aug. 22, 1936, p. 4.

⁴Social Democratic Federation, U.S.A., Principles and Program, p. 5.

⁵Lewis, Mission of the Social Democratic Federation, p. 7.

followers did in New York state. In July, 1936, the New York contingent launched the People's Party.¹ The following month, the latter voted support and affiliation to the American Labor party,² an organization formed by the New York trade unions and the Labor Non-Partisan League.³ The members of the S.D.F. (People's party) subsequently entered the A.L.P. upon an individual basis, pledging their support to its principles and candidates.

Members of the S.D.F., however, have made it plain that they have no intentions of abandoning their socialist ideas. They have declared that they intend to work for the endorsement of socialism by the American Labor party. August Claessens, veteran socialist member of the S.D.F. expressed the prevailing sentiment when he declared:

"We are going into this movement as Socialists and we will remain Socialists. We are entering the new party in the hope that it will in time become a Socialist Party with a Socialist program."⁴

Presidential Election--1936. In the 1936 presidential campaign, the Social Democratic Federation threw its support to President Roosevelt's candidacy¹ (unlike the S.P. which bitterly attacked Roosevelt as a false messiah of the working class whose New Deal policies were not socialism and whose foreign policies were props to American imperialism).

Many reasons were given by the S.D.F. to justify its position. While it declared that it never had any doubts concerning Roosevelt's social philosophy and espousal of the capitalist system, it nevertheless feared the consequences of electing Alf Landon, whom it characterized as a reactionary, and

¹New Leader, July 11, 1936, pp. 1,3.

²New Leader, July 11, 1936, p. 8; July 18, 1936, p. 3; July 25, 1936, pp. 1,6; Aug. 8, 1936, pp. 1,6.

³New Leader, July 4, 1936, p. 5; July 18, 1936, pp. 1,3.

⁴New Leader, Aug. 8, 1936, p. 6.

¹New Leader, May 16, 1936, p. 8; Aug. 29, 1936, p. 5; Oct. 10, 1936, p. 1.

a foe of democracy, organized labor and social security legislation.²

Roosevelt, on the other hand, showed liberal tendencies, favored economic and social security legislation, supported democratic government and was the candidate of organized labor and the American Labor party in New York.³ Consequently the S.D.F. supported him.

Foreign Policies. Although bitterly opposed to the strategy and tactics of the Communist International, the Social Democratic Federation has nevertheless supported the People's Front governments of Spain and France. While its members have been divided on the question of collective security pacts with the democratic nations as the road to peace, the S.D.F. has nevertheless scored "isolation" and has favored "active cooperation with the world's democracies".⁴

"We believe that active cooperation with the world's democracies will restrain the policy of international provocation and blackmail pursued by reckless dictators, help to preserve the peace, confine the dictatorships within their own frontiers until they collapse from their own internal contradictions, and be a tremendous service in preventing the outbreak of another terrible war."⁵

Criticism of "Militant" Socialist Party

Differences Between "Old Guard" and "Militants"--1936. The best approach to the understanding of the position of the SDF can be made by an examination of the issues which separated its members from the Militants in the Socialist Party.¹ In waging their last primary campaign (March-April, 1936), the SDF took an adamant stand on five propositions:

(1) Repeal of the Detroit Declaration of Principles, chiefly for these provisos:²

²New Leader, Oct. 10, 1936, p. 1.

³New Leader, Aug. 29, 1936, p. 5.

⁴New Leader, March 5, 1938, p. 6.

⁵Idem.

¹New Leader, March 28, 1936, pp. 1,7; April 4, 1936, pp. 1,7.

²New Leader, March 28, 1936, pp. 1,7.

(a) The support of Socialists in the event of war "who for anti-war activities or refusal to perform war-service come into conflict with public opinion or the law".

(b) The meeting of the government's war plans "by massed war resistance".

(c) The Socialist Party "unhesitatingly applies itself to the task of replacing the bogus democracy of capitalist parliamentarianism by a genuine workers' democracy".

(d) In the event of the impending collapse of capitalism, "the Socialist Party, whether or not in such case it is a majority, will not shrink from the responsibility of organizing and maintaining government under the workers' rule."

(2) Unaltering opposition to united front moves with the Communist party and dissident Communist groups. The following were some of the reasons previously given for such a stand:³

(a) "The policy of the Comintern is not dictated by any genuine desire for working class unity or the interests of international Socialism and democracy. The motivating force behind the latest united front maneuver of the Comintern is the Russian national policy and consideration of the expedients and necessity of Soviet diplomacy."⁴

(b) "The Communists have not changed their objective: the destruction of the Socialist and Labor movement. This has been their objective in the past and this remains their objective today."⁵

(c) "Moreover, Socialist parties enter into coalition only with bourgeois parties that stand for democracy. The Socialist parties have never entered into coalition with bourgeois parties preaching dictatorship or seeking to destroy the democratic institutions of a country. The Communists, as we have seen, admit frankly that they do not believe in democracy that their aim is the establishment of a dictatorship through violent revolution."⁶

(d) "We condemn as hypocritical united fronts with Communists to preserve civil liberties. Communists, if given power, would deny civil liberties to all their opponents, including the Socialists. . . ."⁷

(3) Opposition to advocacy within the party of Revolutionary Marxism:

³ Kautsky, "The United Front," New Leader, Jan. 4, 1936, p. 5; Jan. 11, 1936, p. 5; Jan. 18, 1936, p. 4; Jan. 25, 1936, p. 4. "Why Socialists Are Against a United Front with the Communists," New Leader, Nov. 23, 1935, pp. 9-12.

⁴ New Leader, Nov. 23, 1935, p. 9.

⁵ Ibid., p. 10.

⁶ Idem.

⁷ New Leader, March 28, 1936, p. 1.

"The Thomas 'left wing' opposition is in favor of allowing members and groups within the party to advocate insurrectionary methods.

"We are opposed to it and believe such advocacy can lead to nothing but ruin and disaster."⁸

(4) Opposition to the admission withⁱⁿ the party of members of Communist splinter groups (former members of the Lovestone group, the Trotsky groups, etc.) for the purpose of having an "all-inclusive" party.

"We are opposed to the flooding the Socialist Party with Communist splinter groups on principle, . . . Moreover, we believe such infiltration will not turn the Socialist Party into an 'all-inclusive' revolutionary party, but into an all-divisive party, torn by factions."⁹

(5) Opposition to mass action generally.

"The Thomas 'left-wing' opposition believes in 'action' along Communist lines. They favor tactics of the romantic and exhibitionist sort such as have brought notoriety to the Communist Party. They believe in futile and noisy demonstrations in 'cop'-fighting, in conspicuous uniform dress, in arm-raising gestures, and in all the paraphernalia of Communist tactics. They hold the ridiculous belief that this is action.

"We are opposed to this type of 'action'. We favor intense activity in alliance with Organized Labor to promote social and labor legislation We favor the method of education and propaganda and believe in extended activity in all important public and civic matters"¹⁰

Developments Since 1936. Soon after bolting the party, the Old Guard expressed the belief that time would vindicate its own stand in the S.P. split;¹¹ that although the Militants had succeeded in carrying through their policies, it was at the price of wrecking the party.¹² The admission of the Trotskyists into the S.P. was sharply condemned as another step which would hasten the dissolution of the party.¹³ Finally, the 1936 presidential election campaign conducted by the S.P. was regarded as the first tangible proof

⁸New Leader, March 28, 1936, p. 1.

⁹Idem.

¹⁰Idem.

¹¹New Leader, May 30, 1936, p. 1.

¹²Idem. New Leader, Sept. 26, 1936, p. 7.

¹³New Leader, June 20, 1936, p. 2.

of its incorrect policies because of the poor showing made by Norman

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Thomas.

Criticism of Communist Party

Prior to Seventh World Congress of Comintern (1935).¹ The general nature of the S.D.F.'s criticism of the Communist party prior to 1935 has been briefly indicated in discussing the rift between the Militant and Old Guard sections of the S.P.² (The breach between both factions was widened steadily to a large measure because of the fear on the part of the Old Guard that these doctrines were being absorbed by the Socialist party.)

Since the Seventh World Congress of the Comintern. The Social Democratic Federation has frankly questioned the sincerity of the Communist International in abandoning its old orientation and raising the new slogan of "Democracy versus Fascism".³ It does not believe the new line has been brought about by any change in objective conditions, or change in heart on the part of the Comintern, but rather because of expediency: Stalin has conceived of this strategem as the means of retaining his political and military ties with the "democracies" of Western Europe.

"For seventeen years the Communists in Russia and outside of Russia have preached the doctrine that democracy was the instrument of capitalism for the enslavement of the working class. . . .

"And now the Comintern has discovered the necessity of 'a broad anti-fascist people's front,' . . . declaring that they have 'always fought and continue to fight against all attacks of the reaction upon democratic rights as the most important conquest of the masses in capitalist society,' . . ."

"The idea that saving democracy may be a good thing for Russia, too, has not yet dawned on the minds of the Communists, for such a revelation

¹⁴New Leader, Nov. 14, 1936, pp. 4,7.

¹Oneal, American Communism; Socialism versus Bolshevism. Hillquit, From Marx to Lenin. Kautsky, Communism and Socialism; Bolshevism At a Deadlock.

²Supra.

³New Leader, June 27, 1936, p. 8; Nov. 14, 1936, p. 5; April 2, 1938, p. 3.

would carry with it the logical necessity of abandoning the Communist dictatorship over the Russian people. In Russia, where Stalin rules as an absolutist emperor, Socialists, Communists, liberals and all believers in 'bourgeois democracy' continue to languish by the thousands and hundred of thousands in jails and in exile; but abroad Stalin has now discovered the need of preserving the 'remnants' of democracy."

"Summarized and stripped of its clumsy, cheap Machiavellianism, so utterly transparent, the new policy of the Comintern is to refrain for the time being from any open subversive activity in countries like France and Poland, to preach a bogus Communist democracy in these countries insofar as this may be necessary for the support of Russian national policy, but to continue at the same time the work of destruction of democracy and the Socialist and labor movement in all other countries. . . ."⁴

In consequence of its distrust, the S.D.F. has spurned all offers of united front, People's Front or any other kind of front with the Communist party.⁵

The Soviet Union. The S.D.F. has held that happenings in the Soviet Union justify its skepticism regarding the Comintern's new line. Despite the latter's espousal of democracy, there is no such thing in the Soviet Union, it has held. Thousands of Socialists have been executed or are languishing in prison cells for differing with Stalin.¹

Even the New Soviet Constitution has not materially altered the situation. Freedom of speech and press are non-existent. Only the Communist party has received legal recognition; other political organizations may not be established.²

B. C. Vladeck who visited the U.S.S.R. reported that, as far as he could observe, socialism was receding further and further into the background and was being replaced by totalitarian doctrines. He said:

⁴New Leader, Aug. 3, 1935, p. 6.

⁵Ibid., pp. 6,7.

¹New Leader, Aug. 3, 1935, pp. 6,7; Nov. 30, 1935, p. 1; Feb. 29, 1936, p. 1; June 27, 1936, p. 8.

²New Leader, July 18, 1936, p. 4; Oct. 17, 1936, p. 4.

"Soviet Russia is moving now in the direction of nationalism rather than Socialism Soviet Russia is assuming rapidly the aspects of a totalitarian state, which, while benevolent to certain elements of the population, lacks the fundamental prerequisites of a Socialist society: freedom for the development of the masses and opportunity for their independent creative activity. Russia is not moving toward but away from Socialism."³

A further indictment of the Stalin regime has been its alleged falsification of history and the alteration of basic treatises of Marx, Engels and Lenin to fit in with the new party line. The charge has been further made that American history also has thus been rewritten, distorted and falsified.⁴

The Moscow Trials. The Social Democratic Federation has drawn a parallel between the Moscow Trials and the Salem, Massachusetts witchcraft trials. Although in no measure politically sympathetic towards the Trotskyists, the S.D.F. has nevertheless expressed its belief that the charges preferred against Trotsky and the Old Bolsheviks were basically unfounded, and the confessions and recantations were involuntarily made.¹

"That Trotsky and the men who were shot had taken up the theory and practice of individual assassination as a political method -- a theory and practice which they had, on well reasoned grounds, rejected and condemned through all the many years of their activity in the revolutionary movement -- is something that we could believe only upon the strongest evidence. And not only is there no strong evidence -- there is no evidence at all."²

The significance of the trials to the S.D.F. is that they are an inevitable and inescapable outgrowth of dictatorship.

" . . . The theory that political dissent is a mortal danger to the working class, logically justifies the Bolshevik dictatorship. And all inquisitions and dictatorships, in Russia, Spain or anywhere else, are by their very nature cruel, treacherous and conducive to moral perversion and intellectual decay alike among the rulers and the ruled.

"And that is the lesson of the judicial murders in Moscow -- not that Stalin is a scoundrel but that dictators have to behave as scoundrels and that dictatorship breeds scoundrelism."³

³New Leader, Oct. 17, 1936, p. 4.

⁴New Leader, June 11, 1938, pp. 2,7; Dec. 24, 1938, p. 2.

¹New Leader, Sept. 12, 1936, p. 8; Feb. 6, 1937, p. 8.

²New Leader, Sept. 12, 1936, p. 8.

³New Leader, Feb. 6, 1937, p. 8.

Criticism of Trotskyists

The Social Democratic Federation is more or less of the opinion that Stalin and Trotsky represent different aspects of Bolshevism and dictatorship, both of which are anathema to the S.D.F.⁴

"Between Stalin and Trotsky we have no choice. The substitution of a Trotskyist regime for the Stalinite domination would be no gain for humanity. We are not interested in the conflict between the two species of Bolshevism, . . ."⁵

"It is well, therefore, while denouncing the Moscow atrocities, to bear in mind that most if not all of the victims are men whose own past records are just as atrocious as Stalin's.

"And that is equally true of Leon Trotsky. When he was high in power he did all that Stalin is doing now, and even on a larger scale, with the sole difference that he did not as a rule try to disguise a massacre under the formalities of a so-called trial."⁶

" . . . What is going on in Russia is not a duel between Stalin and Trotsky, nor even between Stalinism and Trotskyism. It is something much more fundamental than that. It is the transformation of the regime from a party dictatorship with social aims, such as they were, into a personal dictatorship whose tendencies are essentially nationalistic. Not Trotskyism but Bolshevism is being liquidated. Bolshevism is liquidating itself."⁷

⁴New Leader, Jan. 23, 1937, p. 4.

⁵New Leader, Sept. 12, 1936, p. 8.

⁶New Leader, Feb. 6, 1937, p. 8.

⁷Idem.

PART IV

THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT

CHAPTER XIV

THE COMMUNIST PARTY, U.S.A. -- HISTORY

It is impossible within the limits of this work to present a detailed history of the American Communist party. At best only a few of the highlights can be presented. Alex Bittelman, noted Communist, has divided its history and development into three periods.

"(1) The first period is the period of separation from social-reformism and the gathering of the Communists in the United States into one Party. (2) The second period is the period in which the Communist Party developed itself into a propagandist of Communism and functioned primarily as a propagandist of Communism. (3) The third period is the period in which the Party begins to emerge from the propagandist stage, moving to the turning point from which will become possible its rapid conversion into a mass political party of the working class."¹

1919 - 1921

Organization. The Communist Party, U.S.A., was formally organized in September 1919.² Its charter membership was comprised of many militant political and trade union elements coming from such diverse sources as the Socialist Labor party, the Industrial Workers of the World, the American Federation of Labor and the Socialist party.³

Although numerous tendencies answered the call for the new political party, the largest group which formed the backbone of the movement came from the left-wing of the Socialist party.⁴ For years prior to the break, a bit-

¹Bittelman, op. cit., p. 57.

²Bittelman, Milestones in the History of the Communist Party, pp. 27-70. Foster, From Bryan to Stalin, pp. 282-303. Bimba, History of the American Working Class, pp. 280-292.

³Bittelman, op. cit., p. 28. Foster, op. cit., pp. 292-293.

⁴Ibid., p. 29.

ter struggle had been carried on within the Socialist party by two warring groups, the Rights and Centrists (dominated by Hillquit and Oneal) against the Lefts (led by Charles Ruthenberg). It had been the contention of the latter that the Socialist party was not adequately performing the function of a revolutionary Marxian party because of its failure to carry on a policy of class struggle; that its leadership was bourgeois-reformist rather than proletarian-revolutionary; that it had not taken an unequivocal position on the war question from the very outset; that it did not recognize the inevitability of a violent overthrow of capitalism and the dictatorship of the proletariat as the prelude towards a new social order, but mistakenly looked forward to a peaceful transformation from capitalism to socialism.⁵

"Thus, the three principal issues of the Left wing against the reformists in the S.P. were the dictatorship of the proletariat versus bourgeois democracy, revolutionary struggle against imperialist war and proletarian internationalism versus social-chauvinism, and the Communist International versus the Second International. All these issues arose and matured on the background of the general fight of the Lefts for the revolutionary class struggle against reformism and class collaboration. In its general fight for class struggle policies and tactics, the Left wing (especially in its Manifesto) emphasized particularly two points: the Marxian conception of the class struggle as a political struggle and the need of a revolutionary use of parliamentary action and the need of class struggle industrial unionism."⁶

The revolutionary Marxists in the Socialist party first organized as the Socialist Propaganda League in 1915 and as the Left Wing of the Socialist party four years later. They alleged that in 1919 they had elected 80% of the members of the National Executive Committee (12 out of 15) but that said election had been fraudulently set aside by the Right Wingers who had further consolidated their position by suspensions and expulsions. The charge was further made that the split was precipitated by these same ele-

⁵Foster, op. cit., pp. 284-286. Bittelman, op. cit., pp. 60-61.

⁶Bittelman, op. cit., p. 39.

ments in the summer of 1919; at a party convention called in Chicago, the Right Wing aided by the police had unseated and expelled all known Leftists (August 30, 1919).⁷

After this expulsion the differences among the Left-Wingers which had so sharply made themselves felt in their National Left-Wing Convention (June 1919) for a time became even more acute. One group which had declared it would not participate in the emergency Socialist party convention scheduled for August 1919 where the expulsions were made, had already set September 1st as the date of its convention. It had declared itself unwilling to delay any further in the formation of a new revolutionary party. It met on the scheduled date and formed the Communist Party of America.⁸ But on August 31st, in the meantime, the protestants who had gone to the Socialist party convention unwilling to proceed with the formation of the new party but who had nevertheless been expelled from the convention, met and formed the Communist Labor party.⁹ Viewing both groups in historical perspective, C.P. theoreticians today believe that the differences separating them were not principled but tactical, and that both groups should have succeeded in forming a single party at the very outset.¹⁰ However, separate parties were formed and separate programs were adopted which differed, although not in fundamental essential.¹¹ Since both parties adhered to the Third International, unity was finally achieved in December 1921. Charles E. Ruthenberg became the first General Secretary of a united Communist party.¹²

⁷ Foster, op. cit., p. 290. Bimba, op. cit., pp. 283-285.

⁸ Bimba, op. cit., p. 285.

⁹ Bittelman, op. cit., p. 28.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 50.

¹¹ Bimba, op. cit., pp. 285-290.

¹² Bittelman, op. cit., pp. 61-63. Foster, op. cit., p. 291.

1921 - 1934¹

Basic Features. In its early days, the Communist party worked underground, being legally known as the Workers party. In 1923 the underground movement was liquidated and only the Workers party remained. In August, 1925 the party was renamed the Workers (Communist) Party and in March, 1929 its present name, the Communist party, was formally adopted.²

According to party historians, this second period laid the basis for its present activities.

"The second period in the history of our Party is the period in which it developed itself into a propagandist of Communism and functioned primarily as a propagandist organization. Essentially, the Party is still in this period, but just now it is beginning to emerge from it. Already there are signs to show that we are nearing a new period in the life of the Party -- the period of development into a mass political party of the American working class.

"This period, which is thus far the longest in our Party's history, is marked by the following characteristics: (a) the Party carries on systematic work in the unions of the A.F. of L., taking the leadership in the organization of the Left Wing in the unions (Trade Union Educational League); (b) the Party begins to participate in the political struggles, especially in various election campaigns, aiming to apply in this field the policy of the united front, evolving in this process its labor party policies; (c) the illegal Communist Party and the Workers Party (its legal expression) become fully merged; (d) the Party takes the first steps in the direction of work among the Negro masses; (e) there become crystallized within the Party two rigid factions, carrying on an almost uninterrupted struggle during most of this period, until the summer of 1929 when the E.C.C.I. Address lays the basis for the liquidation of the factional situation; (f) the appearance of Trotskyism and the development of Right opportunism and the struggle of the Party against it."³

Sectarianism. An outstanding characteristic of the early days of this second period, Communist leaders have retrospectively declared, was its utter left-wing sectarianism, an inheritance from the Socialist Labor party, the Industrial Workers of the World and the Left Wing of the Socialist party.⁴

¹Bittelman, op. cit., p. 64.

²Foster, op. cit., pp. 295-296.

³Bittelman, op. cit., pp. 64-65.

⁴Foster, op. cit., p. 293.

"The essence of this 'left' sectarianism was an exaggerated belief in the power of revolutionary propaganda alone, due to a lack of understanding of the elementary fact that revolutionary propaganda can educate and organize the masses only if it is linked up with and adjusted to the everyday struggles of the worker. The 'left' sectarianism manifested itself by an impractical approach to the masses; the placing of advanced revolutionary slogans (usually twisted and distorted) that had no connection with the workers' immediate needs. This failure to adapt the revolutionary slogans to specific conditions resulted very largely in keeping the revolutionists apart from the masses and in condemning them to sterile, dogmatic, sectarian isolation over a period of many years.

"Among the traditional types of American 'left' sectarianism were the following: (a) rejection in principle of the struggle for immediate political demands; (b) anti-parliamentarism or refusal to participate in government elections and political activities; (c) dual industrial unionism, or organization of ideal independent unions, instead of participation in existing mass unions; (d) anti-united front tendency, or failure and refusal to unite with natural allies (Progressives, Negroes, poor farmers, etc.) and agitation against the Labor Party in principle; (e) mechanical application in the United States of the revolutionary experiences of workers in other countries without due regard to the different situation; (f) illegalism and other forms of romantic revolutionary adventurism; (g) 'God-killing', or over-stress and distortion of the religious question; (h) anti-Americanism, or ignoring and flouting of American traditions and culture. From its foundation, the C.P. had to wage war against these leftist tendencies."⁵

Factionalism. From 1923 to 1929, the Communist party found itself occupied with several bitter internal factional fights.⁶ The two principal factions were: one headed by Ruthenberg and Pepper (including Weinstone and Lovestone) and another by Bittelman and Browder (including Dunne, Foster and Cannon). The latter group controlled the Central Committee of the party from 1923-1924; the former from 1924-1929. Although the Ruthenberg-Pepper faction had given leadership to the party with the consent of the Comintern, its policies were not generally regarded as sound as those advanced by the Bittelman-Browder faction.⁷

A United Party--1929. Unity was finally restored in the party by a series of expulsions under direction of the Comintern: ousting of Cannon and the Trotskyists in 1928, and the Lovestoneites in 1929.⁸ Since 1929, the

⁵Ibid., pp. 293-294.

⁶Ibid., pp. 296-300.

⁷Ibid., p. 298.

⁸Bittelman, op. cit., p. 24.

Communist party has alleged, it has been a unified party free from factions and factional struggles. Earl Browder was subsequently elected the party's General Secretary, a post he continues to hold at this writing (1939). From 1929 to 1935, the chief task of the C.P. was to carry out the policies of the Sixth World Congress (1928) and make specific application of its strategy to the United States.

" . . . In 1923-24 the centrists, Salutsky, Lore, Asbelli, etc., were dropped from the Party. In 1928, J.P. Cannon and a few other members of the Bittelman-Foster group became avowed Trotskyites and were also expelled from the Party. And in 1929, Jay Lovestone (the Party Secretary) and John Pepper, leaders of the Ruthenberg group, (Ruthenberg had died two years before) developed right opportunist tendencies and a semi-Social Democratic character along the line of the international Brandler group. Censured by the Comintern, which formally dissolved all the factional groups, they violated its decision and tried to split the Party. But Jack Stachel, William M. Weinstein, Bob Minor, Max Bedacht, Mother Bloor and other outstanding members of their group refused to go along with this criminal enterprise and joined forces with the Bittelman-Foster group for war against the Lovestone splitters, some 250 of whom were finally either expelled from or quit the Party. The fight against Lovestone, following the expulsion of Cannon, broke down the factional walls practically overnight. Like magic, almost, the factional fight disappeared and the Party started rapidly along the path to unity."⁹

1934

The history and policies of the third period, (which should not be confused with the so-called Third Period Communism, a term used in connection with the policies laid down by the Sixth Congress of the Communist International in 1928) date approximately from 1934 to the present writing (1939). In these years the Communist party has been zealously engaged in the task of carrying out the general line established by the Seventh World Congress (1935) and applying it to the American scene. This period will be given extended treatment in the ensuing pages.

⁹Foster, op. cit., pp. 299-300.

CHAPTER XV

THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL -- HISTORY

Introduction

The Communist Party, U.S.A., is one of seventy-two sections of a world organization known as the Third (Communist) International.¹ Lenin issued the call for the Third International in 1914, after the overwhelming majority of the leaders of the Second International had capitulated to their capitalist governments in supporting the "imperialist" war.² It took almost five years to bring his efforts to fruition; on March 4, 1919, the First Congress of the Communist International met in Moscow under Lenin's leadership.³

The backgrounds which made possible this International movement were laid by the Russian Bolshevik party as far back as 1903, when it adopted a program whose basis was that only a forcible overthrow of the existing capitalist regime and the establishment of a dictatorship of the proletariat could usher in a socialist society.⁴

"Starting from small underground circles, through leading broad masses in the revolution of 1905, by winning over the majority of the working class in the open struggle for power in the revolution of 1917, the Bolsheviks achieved the victorious October Revolution and the creation of the Communist International and have now become the great Communist Party of the Soviet Union, which stands at the head of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and is leading the construction of a classless society in the U.S.S.R., and is the vanguard of the Communist International and a major factor in world history.

¹Browder, What is Communism? p. 207.

²Dutt, Fascism and Social Revolution, p. 187.

³E.C.C.I., Fifteen Years of the Communist International, p. 3. Foster, From Bryan to Stalin, p. 143.

⁴E.C.C.I., op. cit., pp. 4-5. Popov, Outlines of the History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Vol. I, chapters II-III.

"The credit for preparing and creating the Communist International is due to Lenin. Lenin's characterization of the epoch of imperialism as an epoch of monopoly and moribund capitalism, its last and highest phase, Lenin's outline of the perspective of the imminence of the proletarian revolution and of the main task of the epoch as the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat, the sharp formulation of the question about the complete rupture with the opportunists of the Second International and the creation of a New International constitute in the main the platform advanced by the Bolsheviks in the Manifesto of the Zimmerwald Lefts and subsequently adopted by the First Congress of the Communist International.

" . . . The great October Revolution which marked the beginning of the world proletarian revolution was the decisive factor in the birth of the Communist International."⁵

Although the history of the Communist International is variously divided by different writers into different periods, a three-fold division is most generally recognized and accepted.⁶ The First Period (1918-1921) was the period of War Communism in which the dictatorship of the proletariat was established in the Soviet Union; similar uprisings in other European countries did not succeed.⁷ The Second Period (1921-1928) was "Stability Period", the period of post-war capitalist boom, during which the international revolutionary movement suffered its temporary set-back.⁸ The Third Period (since 1928) was prospectively characterized as the period of the revolutionary upsurge of the masses, during which the contradictions of capitalism would again become severely acute and revolts against capitalism could be anticipated. This third-period analysis was ushered in by the Sixth World Congress in 1928.⁹ Although opponents of the Communist International have declared that 'Third-Period Communism' unofficially came to an end at the call for the Seventh World Congress in 1935, the Communist Inter-

⁵E.C.C.I., op. cit., pp. 5-6.

⁶Popov, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 363.

⁷E.C.C.I., Program of the Communist International, p. 21; Fifteen Years of the Communist International, pp. 10-21.

⁸Stalin, Leninism, Vol. I, p. 151.

⁹E.C.C.I., Fifteen Years of the Communist International, p. 31. Popov, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 363-364. Olgin, Trotskyism--Counter-Revolution in Disguise, pp. 111-112.

national has denied this allegation.¹⁰

Although the history of the Communist International is important and significant, since this work is chiefly concerned with an understanding of current political trends in the Communist movement, the period following 1928 will be treated in some detail; that preceding the Sixth World Congress will only receive a passing mention.

First Period Communism (1918-1921)¹

First Congress--March, 1919. The First World Congress established the Communist International on its Marxist-Leninist base.

"The historical service of the First Congress lies in that it laid the basis for a single world party of the revolutionary proletariat, and that it formulated its basic task as the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat in the form of Soviets throughout the world."²

Second Congress -- July-August, 1920. The Second World Congress laid the basis for admission of new sections to the Communist International, in an endeavor to keep out non-revolutionary elements from the Comintern.

"In that period, Lenin regarded Centristism as the main, 'colossal, immediate danger' confronting the young Communist movement. Pitilessly exposing the Centrists . . . Lenin insisted upon the absolute non-admission of Centrists into the ranks of the Communist International. . . ." ³

In order to accomplish its purpose, the Second Congress provided 21 stringent conditions to which all sections had to conform in order to gain admission to or remain in the Communist International.⁴ The conditions laid down included such matters as the character of Communist propaganda;

¹⁰ Ming, The Revolutionary Movement in the Colonies, p. 11. Pieck, Freedom, Peace and Bread! pp. 44, 90.

¹ E.C.C.I., Fifteen Years of the Communist International, pp. 10-21.

² Ibid., p. 8.

³ Ibid., p. 16.

⁴ O. Platnitsky, The Twenty-One Conditions of Admission into the Communist International, passim.

the editorship of Communist publications; the removal of centrists from responsible posts in the party; the fight against bourgeois law, propaganda in the army; the carrying on of agitation in rural districts; the exposure of "social-patriotism", pacifism, capitalist-democracy, the League of Nations; denunciation of imperialism in colonial possessions; carrying on of mass work in the trade unions; organization on the basis of democratic centralism; strict adherence to all decisions of the Comintern, its Executive Committee and Congresses; use of the name Communist Party; publication of party documents and decisions; expulsion of all party members rejecting any of the 21 points.⁵

The Congress also took steps to fight the infantile "Leftism" of "semi-anarchist" elements opposed to participation in the work of reformist trade unions, bourgeois parliaments and other capitalist organs of the state.⁶

Second Period Communism (1921-1928)

Third Congress -- July, 1921. During the First Period, the success of the Russian Revolution stimulated similar uprisings in Germany, Hungary and elsewhere. These were put down with much bloodshed.

"When the Third Congress met in 1921, ". . . the Comintern declared that 'the first period of the post-war revolutionary movement . . . is largely ended'. (Theses and Resolutions, Third Congress of the C.I., 1921, p. 3.)"¹

The Third Congress therefore recognized as one of its major tasks the establishment of the Communist movement on a sound organizational basis which would permit it to build for the future during the period of "capitalist stabilization".

⁵Ibid., pp. 27-32.

⁶E.C.C.I., op. cit., pp. 16-18.

¹Ibid., p. 21. (Communists sometimes regard 1923 as the beginning of the Second Period because of the subsequent abortive uprisings in Bulgaria and Germany.)

"In the new conditions, the Third Congress, warning the Communist Parties against sectarianism and, on the other hand, combatting pessimist and defeatist moods, gave the world Communist movement the Bolshevik experience of reorganizing ranks with a view to preparing for the new offensive. The most important historical significance of the main slogan of the Third Congress, the slogan 'To the Masses', was that this slogan was a program of struggle for all the sections of the Comintern for an entire historical period, a program of preparation for the second round of revolutions and wars."²

The Fourth Congress -- November-December, 1922. The Fourth Congress was the last one attended by Lenin. Its chief task was the formulation of correct tactics for reaching non-Communist workers. Tactics of the United Front resulted. According to an analysis by the Comintern, this Congress regarded the social-democratic leaders as a serious obstacle to achieving working-class unity and the growth of a militant working-class movement. It therefore favored the use of the united-front-from-below tactic, by which an appeal for unity could be made over the heads of the social-democratic leaders directly to their rank-and-file following to force united, militant action.³

"The united front tactics, the chief object of which in the opinion of the Comintern is the establishment of the unity of all workers in their struggle against capitalism, the unity of their militant actions, are the tactics of irreconcilable struggle against the main obstacle in that struggle, viz., social democracy. In adopting these tactics, the Communists reserve to themselves the unlimited right to expose the social-democrats even at the time of joint action, and they carry out these tactics primarily in the form of a united front from below."⁴

Even though the Third Congress had intimated that the First Period was at an end, several uprisings again took place in Germany and Bulgaria.⁵ These too were finally crushed, leading the Comintern to declare:

"The battles of 1923 marked the final link in the chain of great class battles of the first period and the starting point of the second period of the general crisis of capitalism. The struggle of the proletariat in that period was a direct struggle for power. Due to the treachery of the Second

² Ibid., p. 22.

³ Ibid., pp. 22-23.

⁴ Ibid., p. 23.

⁵ Ibid., pp. 23-24.

International and the weakness of the Communist Parties, the struggle ended in victory for the bourgeoisie, notwithstanding the revolutionary situation."⁶

Fifth Congress -- June-July, 1924. The Fifth Congress re-affirmed the tasks of Communist parties to be that of establishing firmer contacts with the masses and weaning them from their social-democratic leadership.

"Under the new conditions the Parties had to learn to carry on painstaking day-to-day work in a revolutionary manner among the masses and especially in the trade unions, in the factories, among the unemployed, among agricultural laborers; they had to learn the art of coordinating the partial with the fundamental slogans of the movement. These tasks demanded that the Party ranks be cleansed of opportunists and particularly of social-democratic agents and renegades who endeavored to drag the movement back, and who had begun their retreat from Communism -- to which they had come at the time of 'storm and stress', back to the fold of the Second International."⁷

For the first time, the storm over alleged deviations from the position of Lenin broke out in all its fury. On the questions of the Right (Bukharin-Brandler) and Left (Trotsky-Zinoviev) deviations, the Fifth Congress endorsed the position taken by the Executive Committee of the Comintern, which was that advanced by Stalin.⁸

"Trotskyism, reflecting the counter-revolutionary vacillations of the petty-bourgeoisie, actually proceeded to revise Leninism on the question of the socialist character of the October Revolution by denying Lenin's theory of the building of socialism in a single country. Under the 'Left' banner of struggle against 'national narrow-mindedness' and against the 'Party regime' Trotskyism sought to disrupt the ranks of the C.P.S.U. and the Communist International. The Right group, headed by Bukharin, Rykov and Tomsky, reflecting the resistance of the kulaks to the policy of collectivization and the high rate of industrialization, created a theory of the kulak growing into socialism and expounded the social-democratic theory of 'organized capitalism', under-estimated the elements which were shattering capitalist stabilization, underestimated the revolutionary perspective, and objectively inspired all the supporters of capitalist restoration by their ideology and factional work."⁹

⁶ Ibid., pp. 24-25.

⁷ Ibid., p. 29.

⁸ Ibid., pp. 29-30.

⁹ Ibid., p. 30.

Third Period Communism (1928-)

The Sixth World Congress of the Communist International, which met in Moscow in 1928, ushered in a new period in the development of the Communist International. This new orientation, generally referred to as the "Third Period" in official party literature, is credited chiefly to Stalin.¹ The Fifth Congress broke ground for this new approach when it declared: "The working class is becoming more and more radicalized, the situation is becoming more and more revolutionary."

In essence, the newly formulated thesis held that the economic decline of capitalism was giving rise to new revolutionary movements everywhere which threatened to spell the doom of the capitalist system. Communist parties were therefore urged to take advantage of the new situation and redouble their efforts to give guidance and leadership to the international working class in the coming struggle for power.

"The resolution passed by the Congress on the tasks of the Comintern and its sections pointed out first and foremost, the commencement of a third period in the development of post-war capitalism What was the distinguishing characteristic of the period? Although capitalist stabilization still continued, although production in the principal capitalist countries even exceeded the pre-war levels, nevertheless at the same time all the external and internal contradictions of capitalist stabilization were increasing, while the class struggle was growing more acute and the danger of war was maturing.

" 'This third period renders inevitable a new phase of imperialist wars between the imperialist nations of wars waged by them against the U.S.S.R., of wars of national liberation against imperialism and imperialist intervention, of gigantic class battles. Accentuating all international contradictions, accentuating the internal contradictions in the capitalist countries, unleashing colonial movements, this period inevitably leads, through the further development of the contradictions of capitalist stabilization to the further shattering of capitalist stabilization.' (From the resolution of the Sixth Congress of the Comintern on the report of the E.C.C.I.)"²

¹ Olgin, Trotskyism -- Counter-Revolution in Disguise, p. 112.

² Popov, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 363.

Sixth World Congress -- July-August, 1928.³ The problems facing the Sixth World Congress were thus summarized by Stalin shortly before the opening of its first session:

"Firstly, to carry on an incessant struggle against Social-Democracy along every line, both economic and political, including the exposure of every form of pacifism, with the object of winning over the majority of the working class.

"Secondly, to create a united front between the workers of the advanced countries and the toiling masses of the colonial countries in order to ward off the danger of war, or in order, when war breaks out, to transform the imperialist war into civil war, to smash Fascism, to overthrow capitalism, to set up the Soviet State, to emancipate the colonial countries from servitude, and to organize the world-wide defence of the first workers' republic in the world.

"Such are the fundamental problems and tasks confronting the Sixth Congress."⁴

The general thesis of the Sixth Congress has already been indicated. A new world crisis in capitalism was expected which would ultimately and inevitably lead to successful proletarian revolutions and socialism the world over. This thesis found expression not merely in the vigorous speeches made during the sessions of the Sixth Congress and in its official Program and Resolutions, but also in the subsequent writings of leading Communist theoreticians engaged in expounding the general "line" laid down by this Congress. Strong convictions were expressed concerning the mood of the masses and their revolutionary upsurge during the Third Period.

"Contrary to the social-democratic theories concerning the beginning of a new 'democratic' era in the development of capitalism, an era of 'organized capitalism', the Sixth Congress of the Comintern (July '18-September 1, 1928) on the basis of an analysis of the international situation, characterized the approaching third period as a period of the sharp intensification of all the internal and external contradictions of capitalism which 'will inevitably lead through the further development of the contradictions of

³For a general survey see E.C.C.I., Program of the Communist International; The Struggle Against Imperialist War and the Tasks of the Communists -- Resolution of the Sixth World Congress. Popov, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 363-365.

⁴Stalin, Leninism, Vol. II, p. 126.

capitalist stabilization, to capitalist stabilization becoming still more precarious and to the severe intensification of the general crisis of capitalism'. (Stenographic Report of the Congress)."⁵

"Unevenly but surely, the revolutionary crisis is growing all over the world. . . . 'The idea of storming the citadel of capitalism is maturing in the minds of the masses' (Stalin) all over the world. On the threshold of the new round of revolutions and wars, the role of the Communist Party as the organizer of revolution is assuming decisive significance. 'The victory of the revolution never comes by itself; it has to be prepared and won. And only a strong proletarian revolutionary party can prepare for it and win it.' (Stalin: Report to the Seventeenth Party Congress.)"⁶

"A great upsurge of class struggles is sweeping the capitalist world. A wave of liberation struggles sweeps the colonies and oppressed nations. . . ."

"This is the world situation, described by the general staff of our World Party, the Executive Committee of the Communist International, as a situation 'closely approaching a new round of revolutions and wars,'. . . ."⁷

"The revolutionary upsurge of the workers and peasants is worldwide. It varies in intensity, corresponding to the uneven development of capitalism in the several countries, from intensified strike movements to actual struggles for power. . . ."⁸

"The general capitalist crisis heads inevitably, but not at the same speed in all countries, towards the revolutionary overthrow of the world capitalist system. . . . American capitalism is part of the world capitalist system, subject to its general laws and bound up with its fate. . . ."⁹

" . . . I think the moment is not far off when a revolutionary crisis will develop in America. And when a revolutionary crisis develops in America, that will be the beginning of the end of world capitalism as a whole. . . ."¹⁰

"The second element of the world revolutionary crisis which is maturing is the growing indignation of the masses. Suppressed, driven underground, this mass indignation smoulders deep below the surface in the countries of

⁵ E.C.C.I., Fifteen Years of the Communist International, pp. 30-31.

⁶ Ibid., pp. 46-47.

⁷ Browder, Communism in the United States, pp. 21-23. Also see pp. 243-244.

⁸ Foster, Toward Soviet America, p. 55.

⁹ Ibid., p. 63.

¹⁰ Stalin, quoted in Bittelman, Milestones in the History of the Communist Party, p. 89.

fascist dictatorship. Its secret processes are often not noticeable to the naked eye, and this is why they lead to unexpected outbursts.^{#11}

During the Third Period, as Stalin pointed out, the Communist International redoubled its efforts at exposing, undermining and destroying the leadership of the Social-Democrats over the working class. The C.I. regarded the Social-Democratic leaders as agents of capitalism whose chief function, under the guise of espousing socialism, was to halt the militant activities of workers and shunt off their rising discontent to non-revolutionary channels. In order to destroy effectively the influence of these "misleaders of the working class", the Comintern believed that no opportunity should be lost to expose them and take away from them their rank-and-file following whom they confused and deceived in the trade unions and the Social-Democratic parties throughout the world.

" . . . Developing an irreconcilable struggle against Social-Democracy, which represents the agency of capitalism within the working class, and smashing to atoms each and every deviation from Leninism, which brings grist to the mill of Social-Democracy, the Communist Parties have shown that they are on the right track. . . .^{#12}

"This atmosphere of the revolutionisation and Leftward trend of the masses made it necessary for the Communist Parties to launch a most determined offensive against Social-Democracy, in view of which the resolution pointed out the particular danger, for the Communist Parties, of the 'Left' Social-Democrats and the need of taking all measures to expose them.

"The function of the 'Left' Social-Democrats may be summarized as that of 'intercepting' the discontent of the masses, leading them astray by false 'revolutionary' phrases and thereby restraining them from going over to Communism.^{#13}

" . . . The progress of the revolutionary movement is to be measured by the breaking of the Social Democracy's grip upon the workers, ideologically and organizationally.^{#14}

To accomplish its objective of destroying the Social Democracy, as will presently be shown, the doctrines of social-fascism, dual-unionism, and

¹¹Manuilsky, Revolutionary Crisis, Fascism and War, p. 16.

¹³Popov, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 363. O.

¹⁴Poster, Toward Soviet America, p. 204.

¹⁴Poster, Toward Soviet America, p. 204.

united-front-from-below maneuvers came to the fore in the strategy and tactics of the Communist International.¹⁵

Seventh World Congress -- July-August, 1935.¹ The Seventh World Congress set forth a new orientation for the Communist International which differed sharply in many noteworthy respects from that established by the Sixth World Congress some seven years back. Although opponents of the Communist International have maintained that "Third Period Communism" came to an end in 1935 when the Seventh World Congress met, the Comintern has denied this.² Officially, the Communist International is still therefore in its Third Period, regardless of what interpretations its opponents choose to put upon its present (1939) principles and practices.

In answer to the criticism that it had changed its "line", the Communist International made no denial, but alleged that modifications in "line" were necessary to conform with the changes in objective conditions which had taken place throughout the world.

"It is said that in this connection all the opponents of the Communist International and the enemies of our movement rejoice and say: 'The Comintern is changing its tactics.'

"What astonishing news! The tactics of a political party are not the spectacles of a musty keeper of archives who never takes them off, even when he goes to bed. Tactics, which are the sum total of the methods and means of struggle of a political party, are precisely intended to be changed if changed circumstances require it. We Communists are a live, active party, and not archive rats who fail to see the political and social changes that take place in the life of the people. . . ."³

¹⁵ Discussed infra.

¹For documents of this Congress, see Pieck, Freedom, Peace and Bread! Ming, The Revolutionary Movement in the Colonial Countries. Dimitroff, Resolutions of the Seventh Congress of the Communist International; Working Class Unity -- Bulwark Against Fascism. Mamulsky, The Rise of Socialism in the Soviet Union. Ercoli, The Fight for Peace.

²Pieck, op. cit., pp. 44, 86-88, 90.

³Mamulsky, Work of the Seventh Congress, p. 54.

Despite its new orientation, the Comintern nowise admitted that the revolutionary upsurge of the masses had in any sense abated.

"The revolutionary crisis is not yet matured, but it is maturing all over the world. By its frantic preparations for war and its attempts to set up the fascist dictatorship in more and more countries, the bourgeoisie is rendering the situation increasingly acute and accelerating the maturing of the crisis."⁴

" . . . The evaluation of the world situation which was given by Comrade Stalin at the Seventeenth Congress of the C.P.S.U. and by the Seventh Congress of the Communist International -- 'the revolutionary crisis is maturing and will continue to mature', 'the capitalist world is entering a period of sharp clashes as a result of the accentuation of the internal and external contradictions of capitalism' -- fully and completely corresponds to the contemporary international situation, and to the situation in the colonial countries in particular. . . ."⁵

The new point of departure, however, was the menace of the rising tide of fascism. How could it be stopped? How could the Soviet Union best be protected from its threatening ravages? These were the fundamental questions, which the Seventh Congress set out to solve, Communists have declared.

M. Ercoli, in his speech before the Seventh World Congress, stated:

" . . . To concentrate our battle fire against German fascism, as the principal instigator of war and the mortal enemy of the Soviet Union and the proletarian revolution, is the duty of every revolutionary Whoever fails to understand this duty fails to understand anything of the forms in which the fight between reaction and revolution is developing in Europe today."⁶

In order to defeat fascism and save the Soviet Union, the Seventh World Congress recommended that Communists sponsor the formation of Popular Fronts with all those elements genuinely opposed to fascism (socialists, liberals, trade-unionists, democrats, etc.). An anti-fascist common denominator was to unite working-class and non-working-class groups and individuals. This doctrine of the Popular Front (or People's Front) was the basis of all the

⁴ Pieck, op. cit., p. 90.

⁵ Ming, op. cit., p. 11.

⁶ Ercoli, op. cit., pp. 25-26.

policies formulated by the Seventh Congress.

" . . . We must make the defense of the U.S.S.R. the starting point for a broad, general people's front of classes, of organizations and of political parties which are beginning to render the U.S.S.R. active support."⁸

"Today, the internal and external aggression of the bourgeoisie finds its concentrated expression in fascism and war. And in fighting against all forms of bourgeois dictatorship the proletariat must concentrate all its efforts on the struggle against fascism as its bitterest enemy. . . . It must extend the front of possible allies in the fight against fascism and war to those social groups, classes and nations which are not adherents of the proletarian dictatorship, or adherents of the social revolution. . . ."⁹

"The People's Front has come to life as an imperative tactic of the day for bringing nearer, through the continuous broadening of united action, the political unity of the proletariat; for winning the majority of the working class through day-to-day struggles to the banner of revolution; for realizing the historic alliance between the proletariat and the middle strata of village and city; for promoting in that alliance the leadership of the proletariat; and for developing the Party of the proletariat as a mass party capable of exercising its role as vanguard of the revolutionary class."¹⁰

"Relying on the U.S.S.R., the proletariat must create within each country a broad people's front for the struggle against war and unite the broad masses of the people into a united front against the instigators of war. And this makes it necessary for the Communists to substitute for the old, amateurish methods of conducting isolated, short, anti-war campaigns, such a broad and coordinated struggle against war that would, on the basis of the peace policy of the U.S.S.R. draw into its ranks all the anti-war forces on a national as well as an international scale; a struggle that would combine within itself all the various forms of action: . . . Today, shooting from the old-fashioned shotgun of small campaigns in defense of peace is quite inadequate when the Communists can use the tanks of the broad people's movements against the menace of imperialist war."¹¹

In answer to critics who have called the People's Front policies of the

⁷Dimitroff, Working Class Unity -- Bulwark Against Fascism, pp. 28-29. Mamulsky, op. cit., pp. 10-11. Foster, From Bryan to Stalin, pp. 327-333.

⁸Mamulsky, The Rise of Socialism in the Soviet Union, p. 54.

⁹Mamulsky, The Work of the Seventh Congress, p. 11.

¹⁰V.J.Jerome, "The People's Front Strikes from the Shoulder," The Communist (July, 1936), Vol. XV, No. 7, p. 623.

¹¹E.C.C.I., The Menace of a New World War, p. 45.

Seventh World Congress a departure from Marxism-Leninism, Communists have hastened to point out that, on the contrary, it is a strengthening rather than a weakening of their basic position.

" . . . As a rule we seek to fulfill our function as a vanguard within and in the front lines of the mass movements of our class and its allies, in line with the policy of the united front and People's Front, instead of being forced (as in the past) ourselves to lead minority movements and struggles. This is clearly more advantageous to the class as well as to ourselves as its vanguard. It is more advantageous for the needs of the day as well as for the ultimate socialist liberation."¹²

Communists have steadfastly maintained that the change of line has not meant that their old position had been incorrect. Far from it, they found in the new orientation evidence that their movement was alive and vital. The approach of the Sixth Congress in 1928 had been correct even as that of the Seventh was likewise right in 1935, they alleged; the new line was simply another strategy made necessary by changing conditions.

"Standing firmly on the impregnable position of Marxism-Leninism, which has been confirmed by the entire experience of the international labor movement, and primarily by the victories of the great October Revolution, our Congress, acting in the spirit and guided by the method of living Marxism-Leninism, has reshaped the tactical lines of the Communist International to meet the changed world situation."¹³

"The first argument says that by adopting a new tactical orientation the Communists are admitting, whether they want to or not, that their old tactical orientation was wrong and had to be changed because it was wrong. To this our answer is: Not at all. The Seventh World Congress formulated a new tactical line because new conditions have arisen, not because the old line was wrong. The Communists are Marxists, Leninists, Stalinists. We adopt such tactics as best suit the concrete conditions. We will adopt new tactics again when changing conditions will demand it. . . ."¹⁴

Everything else aside, the new approach of the Communist International necessitated a change of its 1928-1934 strategy. Since the doctrines of dual unionism, social-fascism, and the united-front-from-below were more or

¹² Bittelman, Milestones in History of the Communist Party, p. 19.

¹³ Dimitroff, Resolutions -- Seventh Congress of the Communist International, p. 11.

¹⁴ Browder, Build the United People's Front, p. 6. Also see p. 10.

less incompatible with the People's Front, they were dropped.¹⁵

CHAPTER XVI

THE COMMUNIST PARTY -- ANALYSIS OF DEMOCRACY, FASCISM AND WAR (1928-1935)

Principles of Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism¹

During the period ushered in by the Sixth World Congress, the Communist International and its many sections (including, of course, the Communist Party, U.S.A.) reiterated and reaffirmed their basic position on their ultimate objective,² the nature of the state, democracy, fascism and war.

"The ultimate aim of the Communist International is to replace world capitalist economy by a world system of communism. . . ."³

"Basing itself on the experience of the revolutionary labor movement on all continents and of all peoples, the Communist International, in its theoretical and practical work, stands wholly and reservedly upon the ground of revolutionary Marxism and its further development, Leninism, which is nothing else but Marxism of the epoch of imperialism and proletarian revolution."⁴

The State

The traditional Marxist-Leninist view of the state as an instrument of oppression, exploitation and coercion, and an executive committee of the ruling capitalist class, was boldly proclaimed. Addressing the workers of the United States, M. Olgin attempted to make the Communist position clear:

" . . . You have been fed so much 'democracy' bunk that you think it is almost sacrilege to reveal the true nature of the State. This is exactly what your masters are after with their propaganda. They want you to believe that the State is holy and that its high functionaries are like saints surrounded by halos. All the pulpits, schools, newspapers, radio, lectures,

¹ Stalin, Foundations of Leninism, passim.

² Stalin, Leninism, Vol. I, pp. 387-388.

³ E.C.C.I., Program of the Communist International, p. 30.

⁴ Ibid., p. 10.

moving pictures are engaged in giving you false notions about the State. . . .

"The State is an instrument of power in the hands of the big industrialists, bankers and landlords, who by this token are the ruling class. The State is there to effect the exploitation and oppression of the workers and the poor and small farmers and also of the subjugated colonial peoples, by the ruling class. The Constitution, the government, its laws, its agencies: the army, the militia, the police, the courts, the jails, the legislatures -- all are there to effect the exploitation and oppression of you and millions like you."⁵

In modern society, Communists taught, the state may take many nominal forms: democracy, limited monarchy, fascism, etc. Despite these apparent differences in form, in its essence the basic nature of the state and the role it plays remains unchanged: the instrument used by capitalists to maintain their hegemony and the status quo.

"The Communists are the only group in present-day society who recognize the basic nature of the capitalist State. The State may change its appearance and its appendices. It may use the parliamentary system, with a limited freedom of speech to opponents -- as long as this opposition is not too dangerous. It tightens the screws and tries to silence the opposition when the situation becomes disturbing for big capital -- as this was done under Wilson during the war. It may do away with parliamentary procedure altogether and institute an open reign of terror when danger to capitalism becomes particularly acute due to the rising tide of the revolutionary labor movement -- as was done in fascist Germany. The forms change. The phraseology differs according to time and place. The essence remains. The essence of the capitalist State is service in the employ of capitalism for the preservation of capitalism."⁶

Communists did not believe it possible to capture the state machinery at the polls and thus transform capitalism to socialism peacefully. The present rulers of society would resist to the death and use their extra-legal and economic control of the state to organize a counter-revolution to crush those who legally gained control. The only solution, therefore, they argued, consisted in the forcible overthrow of the existing state, the confiscation of all raw materials, public utilities and instruments of production, and the establishment of a Soviet America, with power lodged in an

⁵Olgin, Why Communism? (Second Revised Edition), p. 23.

⁶Ibid., p. 25.

all-Soviet Congress elected by workers, farmers and soldiers.⁷

"We Communists say that there is one way to abolish the capitalist State, and that is to smash it by force. To make Communism possible the workers must take hold of the State machinery of capitalism and destroy it."⁸

"The Communist Party is the only Party which organizes the workers and farmers to create a revolutionary government which will confiscate the industries, banks, railroads, etc. from the parasite capitalists who have proved they do not know how to run them, and to put the industrial machinery to work for the benefit of the masses of workers and farmers."⁹

Democracy: Meaning and Nature¹

During the period following the Sixth World Congress, Communists everywhere pointed out the deceptions, shortcomings and inadequacies of "democracy". As long as the economic system of capitalism prevails, they contended, those who control the economic order also control its politics; directly, by their ability to finance candidates and political campaigns, and destroy any opposition to their policies through resort to bribes and underhand politics; indirectly, by the propaganda disseminated through agencies of their domination: newspapers, schools, magazines, radio, church. In the eyes of the C.P., democracy was nothing but a masked bourgeois dictatorship.

In consequence, Communists alleged, workers going to the polls are confronted, in the candidates and politics of the major parties, with tweedle-dum and tweedle-dee; neither candidates nor policies represent their choice or interests.

In the matter of that much-vaunted freedom of speech and press, Communists likewise held that these Constitutional rights are always observed in

⁷Ibid., pp. 58-64.

⁸Ibid., p. 32.

⁹Browder, Communism in the United States, pp. 94-95. Also see Foster, Toward Soviet America, p. 279.

¹Dutt, Fascism and Social Revolution, pp. 82, 255, 274. E.C.C.I., Program of the Communist International, pp. 37-39. L. Magyr, "What is Fascism?" The Communist (April, 1934), Vol. XIII, No. 4, p. 378-380.

the breach in crucial or critical times. During war, opposition by word of mouth or newspaper, is punished by long prison terms for espionage. Likewise during an economic crisis, strikers who attempt to address their fellow-workers or distribute handbills, are clubbed and jailed. In short, freedom of speech and press are only accorded to those in agreement with the underlying premises of the existing politico-economic system when that system functions smoothly. Workers who base their hopes for peaceful progress on freedom of speech and press are clinging to illusions, the C. P. argument ran.

"Lenin said:

" 'In a capitalist society, under the most favorable conditions of development, we have a more or less complete democracy in the democratic republic. But this democracy is always limited by the narrow-framework of capitalist exploitation and therefore always remains in reality a democracy for a minority, only for the possessing classes, only for the rich. The freedom of a capitalist system always remains much the same as that of the Greek republics of antiquity: a freedom for slave-owners. The hired modern slaves, thanks to the conditions of capitalist exploitation, remain so crushed by need and misery that they have no interest in "democracy" and "politics", and in the ordinary, peaceful, course of events. The majority of the population does not participate at all in social and political life.' (Lenin, Complete Works, Vol. XXI.)

"Democracy for an insignificant minority, democracy for the rich, -- that is the democracy of capitalist society. Even in the freest and most democratic republics, even in their most developed form, even where the labor movement enjoys the broadest 'legality', bourgeois democracy only disguises by its democracy the fact that the bourgeois-democratic State is nothing but a personification and incorporation of class domination, of the class dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, have shown that bourgeois democracy means the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, that the bourgeois State, however democratic it may be, is nothing but the incorporation of bourgeois dictatorship.

" 'Democracy under the capitalist regime is only a capitalist democracy, a democracy of the exploiting minority, consisting in limiting the rights of the exploited majority -- a democracy directed against that majority.' (Stalin)

"That is the meaning of bourgeois democracy."²

Genuine political democracy, it was pointed out, is incompatible with economic (capitalist) autocracy. Only under an economic system where all instruments of production are commonly owned and democratically managed can

² Magyr, op. cit., p. 378.

there be a true political democracy. As the outstanding example of this, the Communist party pointed to the Soviet Union where economic democracy and political democracy were declared to go hand in hand.³

Fascism: Meaning and Nature⁴

The Communist analysis of fascism may be briefly stated thus: Fascism is a dictatorial stage in the decline of capitalism, resulting from the conscious effort of the industrial and finance capitalists to retain their control of industry and production which have been threatened by the growing discontent of an impoverished proletariat, brought on by the necessarily faulty functioning of the capitalist system.

"What is fascism? It is 'the open, terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinist and most imperialist elements of finance capital.'

"What is its purpose? It is to enforce the policy of finance capital, which is to bolster up its profits at the cost of degrading the living standards of the toiling population, to violently smash the resistance of the working class, to behead the working class by the physical extermination of its leading cadres, the Communists.

"Where does it find its mass basis? Among the petty-bourgeoisie, by demagogic promises to the desperate, impoverished farmers, shopkeepers, artisans, office workers and civil servants, and particularly the declassed and criminal elements in the big cities. It also tries to penetrate the more backward strata of the workers."⁵

" . . . Fascism is the desperate effort of finance capital, which has inveighed many smaller capitalists, large sections of the deluded middle class and many backward workers to help it beat back the advancing proletarian revolution and to maintain in existence the obsolete capitalist system, that history has irrevocably sentenced to destruction and to replacement by Socialism."⁶

"Fascism, in short, is a movement of mixed elements, dominantly petit-bourgeois, but also slum-proletarian and demoralized working class, financed and directed by finance-capital, by the big industrials, landlords and fin-

³Browder, op. cit., p. 101. E.C.C.I., op. cit., pp. 37-39. Dutt, op. cit., p. 82.

⁴E.C.C.I., op. cit., pp. 24-25.

⁵Browder, op. cit., p. 27.

⁶Foster, From Bryan to Stalin, pp. 322-323.

anciers, to defeat the working-class revolution and smash the working-class organisations."⁷

R. Palme Dutt, British Communist theoretician, has listed the following as the outstanding characteristics of fascism:

- "1. The basic aim of the maintenance of capitalism in the face of the revolution which the advance of productive technique and of class antagonisms threatens.
2. The consequent intensification of the capitalist dictatorship.
3. The limitation and repression of the independent working-class movement, and building up of a system of organized class-co-operation.
4. The revolt against, and increasing supersession of, parliamentary democracy.
5. The extending State monopolist organization of industry and finance.
6. The closer concentration of each imperialist bloc into a single economic-political unit.
7. The advance to war as the necessary accompaniment of the increasing imperialist antagonisms.

All these characteristics are typical, in greater or lesser degree, of all modern capitalist states, no less than of the specifically Fascist states."⁸

Democracy versus Fascism? During the period from the Sixth to the Seventh World Congress, Communist theoreticians were at great pains to make clear that in its essential features bourgeois democracy and fascism are identical.⁹ They made their sharpest attacks upon those Social-Democratic leaders who deigned to declare that fascism is not the same as democracy, that democracy does not pave the way for fascism, and that the defense of democracy is the best bulwark against fascism.¹⁰

"Fascism is not an alternative to capitalism; it is capitalism, the most extreme expression of the capitalistic dictatorship. . . . The difference between Fascism and a bourgeois democratic regime is that the former is more extreme and brutal in its exploitation of the toilers. . . ."¹¹

"First, it must be understood that fascism grows naturally out of bourgeois democracy under the conditions of capitalist decline. It is only

⁷Dutt, op. cit., p. 102.

⁸Dutt, op. cit., pp. 92-93. Also see Browder, op. cit., pp. 114-115.

⁹Dutt, op. cit., pp. 78-79, 235-236, 255-256, 275, 296, 299. Foster, Toward Soviet America, p. 205. Mamulsky, Revolutionary Crisis, Fascism and War, p. 26. Olgin, op. cit., pp. 44-48.

¹⁰Browder, Meaning of Social-Fascism, p. 16; Communism in the United States, p. 28.

¹¹Foster, op. cit., p. 205.

another form of the same class rule, the dictatorship of finance capital . . . #12

"From this it is quite obvious that the difference between the rule of capitalist democracy and the rule of fascism is a difference in form and method, not in principle. The principle remains the same: serving the interests of the owners of wealth. The foundation of society remains the same: private ownership and exploitation. The fascist regime is the open dictatorship of the capitalist class, the terrorist dictatorship, with the veil of democracy cast away. We Communists value the democratic rights which the workers have won -- as a consequence of incessant struggle -- under capitalist democracy. We are ready to defend these rights. We strive to bring about united working-class action to defend these rights. But we realize that capitalist democracy is the disguised dictatorship of the capitalist class, that there is no fundamental difference, no difference in substance between capitalist democracy and fascism."#13

"Does this mean that, so long as the forms of bourgeois democracy remain, bourgeois democracy provides the best defence of the workers against Fascism? On the contrary. The workers fight, and need to fight, tenaciously for every democratic right of organization and of agitation within the existing regime; but they cannot afford for one moment to be blind to the fact that bourgeois democracy is only a cover for the capitalist dictatorship, and that within its forms the advance to Fascism is steadily pushed forward.

"Bourgeois democracy breeds Fascism. Fascism grows organically out of bourgeois democracy. . . . To preach confidence in legalism, in constitutionalism, in bourgeois democracy, that is, in the capitalist state, means to invite and to guarantee the victory of fascism. . . ."#14

"To many, the alternative of Fascism or Communism is no welcome alternative, and they would prefer to deny it and to regard both as rival and in their view even parallel, forms of extremism. They dream of a third alternative which shall be neither, and shall realise a peaceful harmonious progress without class struggle, through the forms of capitalist 'democracy', 'planned capitalism', etc.

"This dream of a third alternative is in fact illusory. . . ."#15

Excoriating attacks were made upon Social-Democrats for their alleged failure to recognize the essential similarity of democracy and fascism.

¹²Browder, Communism in the United States, p. 114.

¹³Olgin, op. cit., p. 46.

¹⁴Dutt, op. cit., p. 299.

¹⁵Dutt, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

"What are the ideas, the misconceptions, with which the social-fascists confuse and disarm the workers?

"First, is the idea that fascism is the opposite of capitalist democracy, and this democracy is therefore the means of combating and defeating fascism. This false idea serves a double purpose. By means of counterposing 'democracy against dictatorship', it tries to hide the fact that the capitalist 'democracy' is only a form of the capitalist dictatorship; it tries to identify in the worker's mind the fascist dictatorship with the proletarian dictatorship in the Soviet Union, and thus cause the worker to reject the road of revolution. At the same time, this slogan is used to hide the fact that capitalist democracy is not the enemy, but the mother of fascism; that it is not the destroyer but the creator of fascism. It uses the truth that fascism destroys democracy to propagate the falsehood that democracy will also destroy fascism. . . .¹⁶

"Therewith the whole card-castle of bourgeois democracy, of the 'democratic' defense against Fascism, of 'democracy versus dictatorship', of the whole Social Democratic line, came tumbling down. The line of the 'Left-Cartel', of the French Socialist Party, of the parliamentary-democratic 'defense' against Fascism, was proved once again only to have smoothed the way for the advance of Fascism, . . .¹⁷

Fighting Fascism. Having thoroughly repudiated the proposition that fascism can be fought by strengthening democracy, Communist party theoreticians affirmed that fascism is an inevitable outgrowth of declining capitalism which can be stopped only by the united-front of an aroused, militant, class-conscious, mass proletariat prepared to overthrow the democratic-capitalist system before it declines to its Fascist stage.¹⁸

" . . . The fight against Fascism can only be conducted on the basis of the united class fight of the workers (leading all the exploited strata) against all the attacks of finance-capital, whether these attacks are conducted through nominal 'democratic' forms or through open Fascist forms. . . .¹⁹

" . . . The path of bourgeois democracy ends in Fascism. The battle for the workers' dictatorship must be fought, not merely after Fascism, but before Fascism, as the sole means to prevent Fascism. Social Democracy says: First Fascism, then Revolution. But Communism says: Revolution before Fascism, and preventing Fascism. Fascism is not inevitable! Fascism only become inevitable if the working class follows the line of reformism, of trust in the capitalist state, of refusal of the united front, and thus

¹⁶ Browder, Communism in the United States, p. 28; also see The Meaning of Social-Fascism, p. 16.

¹⁷ Dutt, op. cit., p. 275.

¹⁸ Dutt, op. cit., pp. 44-45.

¹⁹ Dutt, op. cit., p. 296.

lets itself be struck down by the class enemy. But if the working class follows the line of the united front, of the rising mass struggle, of the building of its Communist Party and fighting mass organisation to the final victory of the revolution and establishment of the workers' dictatorship, then the working class can defeat and crush Fascism and pass straight to the socialist order with no costly and shameful Fascist interlude. This is the path to defeat Fascism."²⁰

War

The war position formulated by the Sixth Congress was basically that enunciated time and again by Lenin and the Comintern: capitalism breeds imperialism which in turn breeds war; nothing short of the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of a socialist economy will eliminate the causes which make war a perennial occurrence.

"War is inseparable from capitalism. From this it follows that the 'abolition' of war is possible only through the abolition of capitalism, i.e. through the overthrow of the bourgeois class of exploiters, through the proletarian dictatorship, the building of Socialism and the elimination of classes. All other theories and proposals, however 'realistic' they may claim to be, are nothing but a deception calculated to perpetuate exploitation and war."¹

"Capitalism breeds war. Capitalism cannot solve its contradictions without war. But this solution is the solution of ruin. War is devastation. It destroys not only precious human lives, but large amounts of goods. It is an orgy of destruction. The brunt of a capitalist war, however, is borne by those who work."²

Revolutionary Defeatism. Although Communists declared they were obliged to oppose war in order to save workers from needlessly shedding their blood in defense of imperialism, they nevertheless realized that they could not always prevent an outbreak. In the event of war, it would be their duty to expose the hypocritical, imperialist aims of the war-mongers, refuse to support the war, spread revolutionary defeatism at home, and look for

²⁰Dutt, op. cit., p. 306.

¹E.C.C.I., The Struggle Against Imperialist War and the Tasks of the Communists -- Resolution of the Sixth World Congress, p. 9.

²Olgin, op. cit., p. 13. Also see pp. 39-43.

every opportunity to turn the imperialist war into a civil war and establish a dictatorship of the proletariat as the first step in the creation of a socialist society.³

"The political program of the Communists in an imperialist war is the program worked out and applied by the Bolshevik Party under the leadership of Lenin in its heroic struggle against the last imperialist war. The main points of this program may be summarized as follows:

(a) The rejection of imperialist 'national defense' in this war. To enlighten the workers and peasants as to its reactionary character. Strongly to combat all tendencies in the labor movement which openly, or covertly, justify this war.

(b) Defeatism, i.e. to work for the defeat of the home imperialist government in this war.

(c) Genuine internationalism, i.e. not 'international' phrases and formal 'agreements', but revolutionary defeatist work to be carried on by the proletariat in all the belligerent countries, for the overthrow of their home bourgeoisie.

(d) To transform the war between imperialist States into proletarian civil war against the bourgeoisie, for the purpose of establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat and Socialism — this transformation to be achieved by means of revolutionary mass action in the rear, and fraternization at the front.

(e) A 'democratic' or 'just' peace cannot result from an imperialist war without the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the seizure of power by the proletariat in the most belligerent States⁴

The only just war which the Communist International urged its adherents to support is one to turn an "imperialist war" into a civil war, or one fought by oppressed colonial peoples for their independence and liberation from the "imperialist yoke".⁵

League of Nations. The Comintern regarded the League of Nations, in Leninist terms, as a "den of thieves". It rejected the notion that the League could be an instrument for world peace, contending that it was a

³E.C.C.I., Program of the Communist International, p. 84; Fifteen Years of the Communist International, pp. 40-41; The Struggle Against the Imperialist War and the Tasks of the Communists, pp. 19-23.

⁴E.C.C.I., The Struggle Against Imperialist War and the Tasks of the Communists, pp. 19-20.

⁵Olgin, op. cit., pp. 42-43. Browder, Communism in the United States, p. 98. Platnitsky, The Communist Parties in the Fight for the Masses, pp. 7-12. E.C.C.I., Program of the Communist International, pp. 57-58, 78; Fifteen Years of the Communist International, pp. 40; The Revolutionary Movement in the Colonies, passim.

creation of victorious imperialist powers who pledged mutual aid to maintain the territorial status quo of Europe. It further held that the League was a deadly enemy of the Soviet Union, and was conspiring to bring about its downfall.

"The League of Nations, founded nine years ago as an imperialist alliance in defense of the robber 'peace' of Versailles, and for the suppression of the revolutionary movement of the world, is itself more and more becoming a direct instrument for the preparation and carrying through of war against the Soviet Union. The alliances and pacts created under the protectorate of the League of Nations are direct means for camouflaging war preparations, and are themselves instruments for the preparation of war, especially war against the Soviet Union."⁶

"The capitalist world, powerless to eliminate its inherent contradictions, strives to establish international associations (the League of Nations) the main purpose of which is to retard the irresistible growth of the revolutionary crisis and to strangle the union of proletarian republics by war or blockade"⁷

"Finally, the Soviet Union does not want to belong to the League of Nations because it does not want to be part of the screen of imperialist machinations which the League of Nations represents and which are concealed by the honeyed phrases of its members. The League of Nations is a 'rendezvous' for imperialist chiefs, who do their business behind the scenes. What the League of Nations says officially is empty twaddle, intended to deceive the workers. But what the imperialist chiefs do unofficially behind the scenes is real imperialist business, which is pharisaically concealed by the eloquent orators of the League of Nations. What can there be surprising in the fact that the Soviet Union does not want to become a member and participant of this anti-nation comedy?"⁸

The Communist International was especially bitter against the Social Democratic movement because of the latter's reputed faith in and reliance upon the League of Nations as an instrument for peace and democracy. For this reason, among others, the Social Democrats were assailed as agents of imperialism and betrayers of the working class.⁹

⁶ E.C.C.I., The Struggle Against Imperialist War and the Tasks of the Communists, p. 6.

⁷ E.C.C.I., Program of the Communist International, p. 27.

⁸ Stalin, Leninism, Vol. I, pp. 401-402.

⁹ Olgin, op. cit., p. 31.

Defend the Soviet Union. Consistent with its fundamental principles of revolutionary mass action and the class struggle, the Communist parties throughout the world were urged to make every effort to keep their capitalist governments on peaceful terms with the Soviet Union by fostering trade agreements on terms advantageous to the U.S.S.R., by opposing co-operation with unfriendly capitalist countries, by urging diplomatic recognition of the U.S.S.R. where such recognition did not exist, etc. Most important of all, in the event of war against the Soviet Union by their own governments, the Communist parties were bound to refuse to support the war, and were required to organize mass resistance to it, and make every effort to turn the war against the Soviet Union into a civil war to overthrow their capitalist governments, establish proletarian dictatorships, form alliances and co-operate with the Soviet Union for building socialism.¹⁰

"In view of the fact that the U.S.S.R. is the only fatherland of the international proletariat, the principal bulwark of its achievements and the most important factor for its international emancipation, the international proletariat must on its part facilitate the success of the work of socialist construction in the U.S.S.R. and defend it against the attacks of the capitalist powers by all the means in its power."¹¹

"In the event of the imperialist states declaring war upon and attacking the U.S.S.R., the international proletariat must retaliate by organizing bold and determined mass action and struggling for the overthrow of the imperialist governments with the slogan of: Dictatorship of the Proletariat and Alliance with the U.S.S.R."¹²

" . . . The proletariat in the imperialist countries must not only fight for the defeat of their own governments in this war, but must actively strive to secure victory for the Soviet Union.

" . . . Therefore, the tactics and the choice of means of fighting will not only be dictated by the interests of the class struggle at home in each country, but also by considerations for the outcome of the war at the front, which is a bourgeois class war against the proletarian State."¹³

¹⁰E.C.C.I., The Struggle Against Imperialist War and the Tasks of the Communists, pp. 27-31; Program of the Communist International, pp. 66-67.

¹¹E.C.C.I., Program of the Communist International, p. 66.

¹²Idem.

¹³E.C.C.I., The Struggle Against Imperialist War and the Tasks of the Communists, p. 29.

" . . . The international policy of the U.S.S.R. is a peace policy, which conforms to the interests of the ruling class in Soviet Russia, viz., the proletariat, and to the interests of the international proletariat. This policy rallies all the allies of the proletarian dictatorship around its banner and provides the best basis for taking advantage of the antagonisms among the imperialist States. . . . It strives to put off the conflict with imperialism as long as possible. . . .

" . . . The proletariat in the Soviet Union harbors no illusions as to the possibility of a durable peace with the imperialists. The proletariat knows that the imperialist attack against the Soviet Union is inevitable; that in the process of a proletarian world revolution, wars between proletarian and bourgeois States, wars for the emancipation of the world from capitalism, will necessarily and inevitably arise. . . ."¹⁴

Opposition to Pacts. The Communist International clearly recognized the need for the Soviet Union to enter into trade agreements and make non-aggression treaties with imperialist powers to prolong peace and delay the inevitable outbreak of hostilities arising from the conflicting aims and interests of the democratic-capitalist and fascist powers.¹⁵ But it nevertheless refused to place any reliance upon pacts, treaties and conferences as means of preventing war.

" . . . Herein lie the objective significance and fundamental aim of the disarmament proposals and conferences initiated by the imperialist States, and particularly of the 'work' of the League of Nations in this sphere: the discussions on 'security'; the proposal to establish arbitration courts; the pacts for the 'outlawry of war', etc. The purpose of all these pacifist schemes, treaties, and conferences are: (a) to camouflage imperialist armaments; (b) to enable certain great powers to maneuver against each other for the purpose of securing, by treaties, a reduction in their rivals' armaments, while at the same time to increase their own military power; (c) to enable the great powers to reach temporary agreements guaranteeing their domination over the weak and oppressed countries; (d) to carry out ideological and political mobilization against the Soviet Union under the cloak of pacifist slogans, or direct preparation for war."¹⁶

The Comintern was especially severe in warning its sections not to be taken in by " . . . the sophistries and catch-words by which the bour-

¹⁴ E.C.C.I., op. cit., pp. 30-31.

¹⁵ Stalin, Leninism, Vol. I, p. 380; Vol. II, p. 325.

¹⁶ E.C.C.I., The Struggle Against Imperialist War and the Tasks of the Communists, p. 51.

geoisie and Social Democracy try to justify war."¹⁷ It admonished all Communists not to be won over to support of an imperialist war even by such a slogan as "Fight against reactionary Fascism".¹⁸

" . . . In the last imperialist war, the Allies made use of the slogan 'Fight against Prussian militarism', while the Central Powers used the slogan 'Fight against Tsarism'; both sides using the respective slogans to mobilize the masses for the war. In a future war between Italy and France, or Yugo-Slavia, the same purpose will be served by the slogan 'Fight against reactionary Fascism', for the bourgeoisie in the latter countries will take advantage of the anti-Fascist sentiments of the masses of the people to justify imperialist war"¹⁹

Opposition to War Preparations. The struggle against war and militarism involves a fight against military appropriations and expenditures, the Comintern urged. All Communists were instructed to expose the war preparations of their respective governments by exposing and opposing the huge war budgets and appropriations for military purposes.

" . . . The slogan: 'Not a man, not a penny for the army', i.e. relentless struggle against bourgeois militarism, against its armies of whatever form, voting against war budgets, etc., holds good."²⁰

¹⁷Ibid., p. 14.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 15.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 14-15.

²⁰Ibid., p. 38.

CHAPTER XVII

THE COMMUNIST PARTY -- STRATEGY AND TACTICS (1928-1935)

Although important theoretical differences exist between strategy and tactics, they are closely interrelated, and in many borderline cases it is difficult to determine where one ends and the other begins. Consequently, the two are not always sharply distinguished. In the main, strategy is concerned with the broad fundamental policies to be pursued to win the masses over to membership in or support of the aims and policies of the Communist party. Tactics, on the other hand, deal with the specific methods of achieving these objectives.

In the discussion which follows, no serious attempt will be made to draw a sharp line between the two.¹ In a general way, the key to the strategy of the Sixth Congress of the Comintern is to be found in a consideration of the following: social-fascism; dual unionism; united-front-from-below; labor party; the Negro question. Under the heading of tactics these questions will be considered: the fight for immediate demands; the creation of sympathetic mass organizations; allied problems.

Social Fascism²

The theory of social-fascism, if not the name, was an inevitable outgrowth of the policies of the Sixth World Congress. Starting from the assumption that the workers of the world were everywhere in revolt and that

¹The Comintern's statement regarding the line of tactics overlaps with Browder's statement of strategy. Cf. E.C.C.I., Program of the Communist International, pp. 80-84. Browder, Communism in the United States, pp.37-38.

²Browder, The Meaning of Social-Fascism, passim.

they were being shunted away from militant mass action by reactionary, Social-Democratic leaders in trade unions and in the political arena, the Comintern concluded that the Social Democracy constituted the main danger to the growth of the revolutionary movement. It therefore held that one of the foremost duties of Communists was to expose the policies of the Social Democrats; objectively considered, despite their lip service to socialism, the latter, by their opposition to the correct policies of the Communist International, were misleading the working class and aiding the cause of fascism. From this approach, the term social-fascism was coined, applicable to all who, while socialists in name, were by the Communist analysis fascist in deed. Further, their real undisclosed role, the Communists maintained, was to retard the advances of workers towards a proletarian dictatorship and keep them saddled to the reactionary capitalist system.

"A social-fascist is one who, while professing to be a Socialist, actually helps capitalist reaction

"The social-fascists defend capitalist democracy which is a blind for the cruel oppression of the masses, and they oppose the dictatorship of the proletariat which is real democracy for and by the masses."³

"The Social Fascists make a great parade of their theory of the 'gradual' evolution of capitalism into Socialism through a process of peaceful parliamentarism

"We have seen . . . just what this 'gradualness' theory of the Social Fascist means in practice -- simply the creation of a united front with the capitalists to throw the burden of the crisis upon the workers, to try desperately to save the capitalist system and to crush back the revolution"⁴

". . . The policy of the Social Democracy is basically that of Fascism; the beating back of the proletarian revolution, the saving of capitalism and the profits of the employers at the expense of the workers. The principal difference is that Social Democracy hides its Fascism under a mask of Marxian Socialism. Thus, in the period of the decline of capitalism, Social Reformism becomes Social Fascism."⁵

"The 'fight' between Social Fascism and Fascism is so much 'sound and

³Communist Party, U.S.A., This Way Out--A Program for American Labor, p. 16.

⁴Foster, Toward Soviet America, pp. 214-215.

⁵Ibid., p. 177.

fury signifying nothing'. The two movements are blood-brothers. Mamilsky says: 'Fascism and Social Fascism are two aspects of one and the same bulwark of bourgeois dictatorship', and Stalin says: 'Fascism is a militant organization of the bourgeoisie resting upon the active support of Social Democracy.' Their quarrel is only a case of friction between two methods of repressing the workers, between two sets of capitalist agents fighting for the flesh-pots of office and control. The Social Fascists would maintain the semblance of capitalist democracy as the best means of forestalling the revolution and they would be its administrators; whereas the Fascists would sweep aside this fake democracy and its champions and proceed to more direct methods of repression. . . . In due season the Social Fascist leaders, in the name of Socialism, will join with the Hitlerites in shooting down the revolutionary workers"6

Although directed primarily against the Social Democrats, the term "social-fascism" was also used to include those alleged followers of Marx and Lenin who while professing to be Communists were not in agreement with the Communist party "line": the Lovestoneites (Jay Lovestone, Bertram Wolfe), the Trotskyists -- the so-called "left" social fascists --, and numerous Communist-intellectuals without avowed party affiliations (Max Eastman, V.F. Calverton, Sidney Hook, etc.). The term was also applied to professed non-Marxists who were also deemed enemies and willful misleaders of the working class.

The Social-Fascists " . . . range from apologies for capitalism through open revision of Marxism to 'orthodox' Marxism of the Kautskyist revisionist school"7

"But the most insidious and dangerous to the workers of all this crop of demagogues are the so-called 'left' Social Fascists. The substance of their activities is, while giving practical support to the right Social Fascists, to criticize them in the name of the revolution. They are the radical phrase-mongers par excellence. Their objective task is the confusion of the most advanced elements of the workers and therefore the breaking up of serious movements against the capitalists and their revolutionary labor henchmen. . . . Trotsky belongs to this general category"8

" . . . Too many of our members still do not understand that Trotskyism and the Trotskyists are not a 'branch' of the Communist movement but rather

⁶Ibid., pp. 191-192.

⁷Browder, The Meaning of Social-Fascism, p. 31.

⁸Foster, op. cit., p. 195.

a police agency of the capitalist class."⁹

In the United States, the Socialist party was called the leading party of social-fascism; it was accused of fostering the development of fascism in many diverse ways, chiefly by putting the breaks on the militant, mass revolutionary action of class-conscious workers.¹⁰ Norman Thomas was called " . . . the leading exponent of social fascism in America . . . "¹¹ Other Americans calling themselves labor leaders but included among those dubbed social-fascists were the following: Hillquit,¹² Lovestone,¹³ Muste,¹⁴ Weisbord,¹⁵ Cannon,¹⁶ Maurer,¹⁷ Hillman,¹⁸ and Dubinsky.¹⁹ On the international scene, those who were assailed as socialists in words but not in deed included such figures as Ramsay MacDonald²⁰ and Karl Kautsky.²¹

The most serious charge preferred against the Social-Democracy was that its alleged social-fascistic tactics had made possible the victory of Hitler and the advent of German fascism.

" . . . The establishment of the fascist dictatorship was only possible for the bourgeoisie in consequence of the sabotage of the class struggle pursued by Social-Democracy, its disorganization and disarming of the proletariat and its ever more pronounced fusion with the capitalist state apparatus. Only owing to the fact that the Communist Party of Germany, as the revolutionary vanguard, was robbed of the support of the majority of the working class by the Social-Democratic policy of splitting, could finance capital erect its terroristic dictatorship over the proletariat."²²

⁹Browder, Communism in the United States, p. 63.

¹⁰Communist Party, U.S.A., op. cit., p. 42.

¹¹Browder, The Meaning of Social-Fascism, p. 34.

¹²Browder, Communism in the United States, p. 130.

¹³Ibid., p. 63.

¹⁴⁻¹⁷Foster, Toward Soviet America, pp. 196-197.

¹⁸⁻¹⁹Communist Party, U.S.A., op. cit., p. 39..

²⁰Foster, op. cit., p. 192.

²¹Browder, The Meaning of Social Fascism, p. 31.

²²Pieck, We are Fighting for a Soviet Germany, p. 54.

Because of these allegations, one of the great strategic tasks the Sixth World Congress thus set for itself was the destruction of the Social-Democracy and its right (A.F. of L. bureaucracy) and left (Trotskyists, Lovestoneites)peripheries. Stern measures were ordered to be taken against social-fascists everywhere -- in the trade unions, on the political field -- in order to expose them before their rank-and-file following.²³

"Social-Democracy is going through its greatest crisis. It is in decomposition, it is at its deepest decline but it would be false to assume that it has ceased to exist. It is for us to destroy it. Every vacillation in our position of struggle in relation to Social-Democracy, every ambiguity in our united front policy for winning the Social-Democratic masses, increases the danger of the reconsolidation of Social-Democracy and could bar our successful way to the restoration of the unity of the working class"²⁴

Dual Unionism

As a further corollary to its "revolutionary upsurge" thesis, the Sixth World Congress inaugurated an extensive movement for the creation of independent unions under the indirect leadership and guidance of the Communist party. This policy of creating rival unions independent of those already existing is known as "dual unionism".

Earlier Attitude. Prior to 1928, the Communists had followed in trade union policies the line set by Lenin and the Second World Congress of the Communist International (1920). Its thesis on trade unionism was opposed to the formation of dual unions. It had declared:

" . . . Any voluntary withdrawal from the economic movement, every artificial attempt to organize special unions, without being compelled thereto by exceptional acts of violence on the part of the trade union bureaucracy . . . represents a great danger to the Communist movement. . . ."¹

As a result of this decision, which was indorsed by the First Congress

²³Browder, Communism in the United States, pp. 125, 130. Foster, op. cit., p. 208. Pieck, op. cit., pp. 7, 54, 62. Piatnitsky, The Bolshevisation of the Communist Parties, pp. 78-80.

²⁴Pieck, op. cit., p. 65.

¹Quoted in Bimba, History of the American Working Class, p. 339.

of the Red International of Labor Unions in 1921,² the general trade union policy followed by Communists was that of "creating revolutionary cells and groups"³ within existing unions on the American scene and elsewhere, a policy sometimes referred to as "boring from within".

T. U. E. L. Pursuant to this policy the Trade Union Educational League had been formed in the United States in November, 1920, under Communist auspices.⁴ Its First National Congress, held in August, 1922, categorically rejected dual unionism.⁵ The Trade Union Educational League was regarded as a left-wing progressive bloc which was to function within the existing A.F. of L. movement.⁶ But the criticisms made by the Fourth World Congress of the Red International of Labor Unions (March, 1928) of the subserviency of the Trade Union Educational League to the corrupt and reactionary bureaucracy of the A.F. of L.⁷ foreshadowed the changes in policy which were to follow the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International.

New Position -- 1928. When the latter met, it openly condemned the American Federation as a prototype which was being eagerly copied everywhere.

"A cynically commercial, and imperialistic secular form of subjecting the proletariat to the ideological influence of the bourgeoisie is represented by contemporary 'socialist' reformism. Taking its main gospel from the tablets of imperialist politics, its model today is the deliberately anti-socialist and openly counter-revolutionary American Federation of Labor The principal enemy of revolutionary communism in the labor movement, 'socialist' reformism, which has a broad organizational base in the Social-Democratic Parties and through these in the reformist trade unions, stands out in its entire policy and theoretical outlook as a force directed against the proletarian revolution."⁸

² Idem.

³ Idem.

⁴ Foster, From Bryan to Stalin, p. 164.

⁵ Ibid., pp. 164-165.

⁶ Ibid., p. 165.

⁷ Ibid., pp. 213-215.

⁸ E. C. C. I., Program of the Communist International, p. 69.

T. U. U. L. Foster has intimated that the reorientation towards independent unions which followed the two Communist Congresses in 1928 (Fourth World Congress of the R.I.L.U. and Sixth World Congress of the C.I.) resulted from changes in objective conditions on the American scene.⁹

In any event, at the fourth national conference of the T.U.E.L. held in August-September, 1929, the name was changed to the Trade Union Unity League (T.U.U.L.).¹⁰ Its program laid emphasis upon organizing the unorganized workers into militant unions affiliated to it. But it gave no indication that it would abandon its left-wing fight in A.F.L. unions unless the latter were "corrupt and impotent".¹¹

The declaration of policy of the T.U.U.L. stated:

"The Trade Union Unity League aggressively furthers the organization of new revolutionary industrial unions in industries where there are no unions and in industries where the existing unions are corrupt and impotent. The organization of the masses into new unions stands in the very center of the T.U.U.L. program. But this does not imply a policy of petty splits and individual withdrawals of the militant workers from the old trade unions where these have a mass character. . . . On the contrary, the T.U.U.L. organizes the left wing in those old unions and fights for their revolutionization."¹²

In sponsoring the formation of independent unions, Communists denied they favor dual unionism as such. They rather argued that new developments had forced such a change at this time.¹³

"Tactics and methods of work may vary depending upon the state of the class struggle. In the light of recent events, the Communist Party favors the organization of independent unions in those cases where such a measure would constitute a step in advance toward the revolutionization of the trade union movement. . . ."¹⁴

⁹Foster, op. cit., pp. 209-211.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 216-217.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 218-221.

¹²Quoted in Bimba, op. cit., pp. 344-345.

¹³Foster, Toward Soviet America, p. 258.

¹⁴Bittelman, Milestones in the History of the Communist Party, p. 81.

" . . . The formation of the independent revolutionary unions was made imperative by the systematic sabotage of the struggle by the more and more Fascist A.F. of L. leaders through open strike-breaking, suppression of democracy in the unions, mass expulsions, betrayal of the unorganized, etc. The TUUL is not a dual organization in the sense of the I.W.W. It does not make war upon the A.F. of L. unions as such, but against their reactionary leaders. . . . The TUUL is the American section of Labor Unions. It is made up of workers of all political opinions. Its relations towards the Communist party are those of mutual support and cooperation in the struggle, without organizational affiliation."¹⁵

From 1928 to 1935, great strides were made under the aegis of the T.U.U.L. in organizing unorganized workers and giving direction and militancy to their activities, Communists reported.¹⁶ In 1933, T.U.U.L. unions with 125,000 members succeeded in leading some 200,000 workers in strikes and gaining an additional 100,000 members, and leading "45% of the strikes, an equal number with the A.F. of L."¹⁷

Problem of Independent Unions. During this period (1928-1935) there also sprang up unions independent of the A.F.L. and the T.U.U.L. Failing to secure control of them, efforts were made by the T.U.U.L. to unite these independent unions and the T.U.U.L. unions into an Independent Federation of Labor.¹⁸ The plan met with little success, however, and it was reluctantly abandoned.¹⁹

Activity in A.F.L. Continued. Communist trade union leaders have said that at no time during this period did they relax their efforts to bring militancy within the A.F. of L. They continued their merciless exposure of its social-fascistic leadership; they fought for workers' rights in indus-

¹⁵ Foster, op. cit., pp. 257-258.

¹⁶ Foster, From Bryan to Stalin, pp. 216-268.

¹⁷ Browder, Communism in the United States, pp. 40-41.

¹⁸ Browder, op. cit., pp. 39-40. C.P., U.S.A., The Way Out, pp. 50, 78-80.

¹⁹ Browder, op. cit., p. 197.

try;²⁰ only pressure from the left upon the A.F. of L. leadership made it possible for the strike movements of the period to assume such large proportions.²¹

Early suggestions for unifying the trade union movement by liquidating the T.U.U.L. unions into the A.F. of L. were emphatically opposed by the C.P. leadership.

" . . . The Party must conduct a sharp struggle against any liquidatory tendencies, and expose the slander and maneuvers of the renegades who call for the liquidation of the T.U.U.L. unions because they wish to strengthen the A.F. of L. bureaucracy, of which they have become a part"²²

Abandonment of Dual Unionism. Beginning late in 1934, however, Communists in the United States began to shift their emphasis from the T.U.U.L. unions to the A.F. of L. unions, and abandoned their efforts at establishing an Independent Federation of Labor. The likelihood of unifying the trade union movement was no longer regarded as out of the question.²³ Browder declared:

" . . . We are now able to say very clearly and definitely that the main task of the Party in the sphere of trade union work must be the work in the A.F. of L., so as to energetically and tirelessly mobilize the masses of their members in the trade unions as a whole for the defense of the everyday interests, the development of the policy of class struggle in the mass unions of the A.F. of L., fighting on the basis of trade union democracy, for the independent leadership of these struggles in spite of the sabotage and treachery of the reformist bureaucrats."²⁴

Evaluating its policy of building independent, and in essence, dual unions, Communists declared that the labor movement was strengthened rather

²⁰Browder, op. cit., pp. 40-41. C.P., U.S.A., op. cit., p. 49.

²¹Browder, op. cit., pp. 40-41.

²²C.P., U.S.A., op. cit., p. 78.

²³Browder, op. cit., pp. 196-197.

²⁴Ibid., p. 208.

than weakened by this development, even though these unions would ultimately be liquidated.²⁵

But it remained for the Seventh World Congress of the Comintern, as will presently be shown, to finally and irrevocably seal the doom of the movement for independent, revolutionary unions.

The United-Front-From-Below

The united front is a well-known tactic in the working class movement. Differences in theory, strategy and tactics have often separated groups of class-conscious workers. Despite these differences, common interests have often found the need of common action. A May Day parade, a Free-Tom-Mooney Rally, a Sacco-Vanzetti Memorial Meeting, are all instances where efforts towards unity for a specific and limited purpose have proved fruitful in the past. Such common action is generally known as a united front.

Efforts to secure a united front are usually directed towards the leadership of the other movement (or movements) with the objective of reaching an agreement which will bind the membership of both (or all) organizations concerned. This type of strategy is known as the united-front-from-above, or, since it is the most usual type of common action, simply as the united front.

When one of the organizations is hostile towards the policies of another and believes its leaders to be "betrayers of the working-class", an appeal for unity is usually made by the former organization directly to the rank-and-file of the latter organization, over the heads of its leaders. This approach is known as the united-front-from-below. Although, as the Communists declared, they made use of both types of approaches from 1928 to 1935,

²⁵Ibid., p. 209.

the emphasis was overwhelmingly upon the united-front-from-below.¹

This doctrine was a logical development of the Communist attitude towards other Marxian movements. Since the theory of social-fascism had evaluated the leadership of rival Marxian groups as defenders of capitalism because of their opposition to the strategy and tactics of the Communist party, little else remained to be done than to appeal to the masses directly, completely ignoring the leadership of these organizations.

"The application of the 'Class Against Class' policy requires the making of united front movement with workers who, while not prepared to accept the whole revolutionary program of the Communist party, nevertheless are willing to struggle for immediate, partial demands. . . . United front organs may take a variety of forms, such as joint strike committees, shop committees, grievance committees, relief committees, defense committees, etc., being composed in each case of representatives of all the unions, A.F. of L. and revolutionary, as well as of the unorganized workers in the given situation. The united front is organized from the bottom; that is, not with the reactionary leaders of the various labor organizations, but with the rank and file workers."²

" . . . We are for the united front from below as 'the fundamental form of the united front' This does not exclude the application of the united front from above. The Communist Party of the U.S. has been applying the policy of both the united front from below and from above, and in doing so it was guided by the proposition that 'In many cases even now it will be possible to get a united front only from below, but there cannot be a united front which comes only from above!'"³

" . . . We need a fighting united front of the workers against the capitalists and all their agents. But that means that unity must be built up, not with these leaders on their present policies, but against them. That means not a united front from the top, but a united front built up by the workers from below in the organization and struggle for their immediate needs."⁴

An important strategic aim of the united-front-from-below was to win converts to the Communist party from other mass organizations. Although the leaders of these organizations had placed themselves out of the pale of Marx-

¹ Ibid., pp. 51-55; 212-213.

² Foster, Toward Soviet America, pp. 253-254.

³ Bittelman, The Advance of the United Front, p. 25.

⁴ Browder, op. cit., p. 52.

ism by the policies they had been pursuing, Communists alleged, their following had not been tainted. Members of the C.P. proclaimed it their duty to win over these woefully misguided and misled workers by exposing the alleged corrupt, anti-working class policies of their leaders.

" . . . In order to win the workers from the influence of the Socialist Party, it is necessary to carry on the most patient, detailed explanation, information, argumentation, with all the workers who are under the influence of the Socialist Party. We will never win these workers away from the Socialist Party merely by calling them social fascists. The workers who follow the Socialist Party are not social fascists. Their leaders are social fascists, and it is they and their program that give the social-fascist character to their party."⁵

"The united front is not a peace pact with the reformists. The united front is a method of struggle against the reformists, against the social fascists, for the possession of the masses. . . ."⁶

Subsequent negotiations on the part of the Communist party for a united-front-from-above with the Socialist party leadership met with no affirmative response from Norman Thomas, for which both were condemned.⁷

The Labor Party¹

No Opposition in Principle. Although the Communist party continuously pointed out the dangers inherent in a Labor party movement, at no time during this period (1928-1935) did it oppose the Labor party on principle. The following directives were promulgated by the Sixth World Congress on this issue:

"On the question of the organizing of the Labor Party, the Congress resolves that the Party concentrate its attention on the work in the trade unions, on organizing the unorganized, etc., and in this way lay the basis for the practical realization of the slogan of a broad Labor Party organized from below."²

⁵Browder, The Meaning of Social Fascism, pp. 41-42.

⁶Browder, Communism in the United States, p. 149.

⁷Bittelman, op. cit., pp. 43-61.

¹Browder, Communism in the United States, Chapters IX, XVI.

²Quoted in Browder & Stachel; How Do We Raise the Question of a Labor Party? p. 2.

Conditions not Ripe. Communist leaders have confessed that from 1929 to 1934 the party came out " . . . against all of the current proposals then being made for the organization of a Labor Party."³ The Seventh National Convention of the Communist party, held in 1930, expressed the official viewpoint when it declared that a Labor party organized at that particular time would make the workers prey to their social-fascist enemies.

" . . . Any Labor Party crystallization at this moment could have only the AFL unions, the Socialist Party and other social-reformist organizations as a basis, or would be composed only of those already in sympathy with the Communist Party. A Labor Party made up of social-fascist organizations would not mean political separation of the workers from the capitalists but would mean the delivery of the workers to capitalist politics under the guise of a Labor Party. . . ."⁴

But by 1934, an alleged change in objective conditions -- the "disillusionment of the masses with the old political parties and their determination to break away"⁵ -- once more made the question of the labor party a practical one.

Basic Labor Party Orientation. The C.P. thesis for a labor party was in accord with its basic orientation of social-fascism and united-front-from-below. Given a correct program, the discontented masses, especially in the trade unions and unemployed organizations, who were not yet ready for membership in the Communist party, could be rallied into a labor party. But, argued the Communists, this party would have to be formed "from below"; that is, the social-fascist leadership -- the A.F. of L. bureaucracy, the Socialist hierarchy, etc. -- would have to be rigorously excluded, or the workers would be betrayed once more.⁶

³Idem. Also see Bittelman, Milestones in the History of the Communist Party, pp. 81-83.

⁴Central Committee Plenum, Thesis and Resolutions for the Seventh National Convention of the Communist Party of U.S.A., p. 15.

⁵Browder & Stachel, op. cit., p. 3. Browder, Communism in the United States, pp. 201-202.

⁶Amter, A Labor Party for New York Workers, pp. 10-11.

The Communist party rejected the idea of forming a "Progressive" or "Peoples" or "Farmer-Labor" or "Labor" party " . . . based on the La Follette, Sinclair, Olson, Long movements and typified by these leaders and their program. . ."⁷ It regarded these as too amorphous in principle to become a militant party of labor; such a party would rather tend to become a "third party of capitalism".

"A 'Labor' Party dominated by a section of the trade union bureaucracy and the Socialist leaders and excluding the Communists could not serve the interests of the masses in any way. A party dominated by John L. Lewis, Gorman, Dubinsky, Waldman, Panken and company, even if it were based on the trade unions, would not be a genuine Labor Party. It would not result in independent class political action on the part of the workers."⁸

Speaking of these same "labor" leaders, the Daily Worker declared:

" . . . The ability of the Communists to expose these people, and swing the masses away from their influence, will be the decisive factor which will determine which road the masses will take in their breakaway from the old capitalist parties."⁹

"Thus it can be seen that the Communists do not propose to build up a reformist Labor Party which would be controlled by the labor lieutenants of the capitalist class. The Communist Party, by participating with the masses in a broad class struggle Labor Party will further their class consciousness. It will educate them through their experiences and struggles so that the common fight against the interests of private property will lead to the revolutionary struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat and the overthrow of the capitalist scheme of things."¹⁰

The Communist party regarded the following as the type of labor party it would support:

"A Labor Party built up from below, on a trade union basis but in conflict with the bureaucracy, with a program of demands closely associated with mass struggles, strikes, etc., with a decisive role in the leadership played by militant elements, including the communists."¹¹

"What kind of a Labor Party do we need? What the workers want and need

⁷Browder, op. cit., p. 202.

⁸Browder & Stachel, op. cit., p. 15. Also see: Browder, op. cit., p. 288.

⁹Daily Worker, March 8, 1935, p. 7.

¹⁰Daily Worker, February 12, 1935, p. 7.

¹¹Browder, op. cit., p. 202.

is a real fighting Labor Party. It should be a party built upon the local unions of the American Federation of Labor and independent unions, on the unemployment organizations. It should be a party with a fighting program, taking up the daily immediate needs of the workers and poor farmers. Its program should consist at least of demands for the unrestricted right to organize into bona fide trade unions, for the right to strike and picket, against injunctions and company unionism, for full and equal right for Negroes, for adequate cash relief for the unemployed, for trade union rates on all relief projects, for an immediate building construction program, for genuine unemployment and social insurance . . . , for a genuine child labor bill, for immediate cash relief for the farmers and cancellation of all debts, against fascism and war."¹²

"The Labor Party should be built upon the basis of the affiliation of trade unions, unemployed, fraternal, farm and other organizations. Such affiliation would not interfere with the functioning of the trade unions, unemployment organizations, etc. These organizations would continue to act in the interests of their membership on the economic field, but would unite their forces on the political field in the Labor Party in order to carry out joint action in the interests of all workers. . . ."¹³

Build the Communist Party. Despite its advocacy of a labor party, Communist leaders insisted upon the necessity for building the C.P. concomitantly with any labor party activities; if the latter were built up at the expense of the Communist party itself, the very purpose for its organization would be lost.

"The Labor Party, even a genuine Labor Party, is not and cannot be a substitute for the Communist Party. . . .

"The Communist Party sees in the Labor Party not a competing organization, not a substitute organization, but rather a means through which the Communist Party can aid in setting the masses on the road of independent class political action, on the basis of their immediate interests and understanding, but with the hope and the knowledge that in the course of the struggle and as a result of the experience of the struggles, the masses will learn that only the program of the Communist Party provides the means for the lasting solutions of the problems of the workers."¹⁴

During this entire period, the position taken on the labor party was chiefly that of a theoretical formulation. The C.P. emphasized that it wanted to crystallize sentiment, but that the initiative would have to come

¹²Amter, op. cit., p. 11.

¹³Ibid., p. 13.

¹⁴Browder & Stachel, op. cit., p. 12. Also see Browder, Communism in the United States, p. 285.

from other sources.¹⁵ All in all, for many reasons, the Communists were not successful in building a labor party conceived in their pattern.

The Negro Question

Since Communists have always turned to the oppressed and the exploited as potential allies, they have eagerly sought to win the Negroes to an acceptance of their principles and to membership in the Communist party. The C.P.'s analysis of the plight of the Negroes in the United States -- the last to be hired, the first to be fired, living in poverty and squalor, with fewest opportunities for education, social improvement, etc. -- suggests many reasons why it has regarded the Negro people as a fertile field for its activities.¹

The Communist strategy for winning the Negroes to membership in the C.P. was suggested by the Communist International² and the experiences of the Russian Revolution.³ In the main it consists in carrying on an aggressive fight for Negro liberation along economic, social and political lines.

Economically, the Communist party has fought against Negro discrimination in employment, in the distribution of home relief, in trade unions. It has attempted to organize the Negroes of the South into a militant, fighting tenant-farmers' and sharecroppers' organization to combat the exploitation of the Southern landowners.⁴ Socially, it has fought against Jim-Crowism and "all discriminatory laws, such as laws legalizing disfranchisement, seg-

¹⁵Browder, op. cit., pp. 203-204.

¹Foster, Toward Soviet America, pp. 224-225; 300-304. Olgin, Why Communism? pp. 48-50.

²Bittelman, Milestones in the History of the Communist Party, pp. 85-86.

³Ford and Allen, The Negroes in Soviet America, p. 32.

⁴Communist Party, U.S.A., The Way Out, pp. 52-53.

regation, laws against inter-marriage, etc."⁵ Politically, it has advanced the thesis of "Self-Determination for the Negroes in the Black Belt".

Self-Determination in the Black Belt. This thesis, suggested by analogy with the racial minorities in the Soviet Union, runs somewhat as follows: The Negroes of the United States constitute an oppressed national minority, inhabiting an area in the South, the Black Belt. The right of self-determination must be accorded them to decide whether they wish to establish an independent Negro Republic or remain a federated Republic of Soviet America which the Communist party is attempting to set up.⁶

The Black Belt as defined by the Communist party consists of contiguous parts of 12 Southern states which are overwhelmingly populated by Negroes (5 million). In addition, another 3 million Negroes form 25% to 35% of the population of adjacent areas.⁷

"The status of the American Negro is that of an oppressed national minority, and only a Soviet system can solve the question of such minorities . . . The constitution of the Soviet Union provides that, 'Each united republic retains the right of free withdrawal from the Union.' The Program of the Communist International declares for: 'The recognition of the right of all nations, irrespective of race, to complete self-determination, that is, self-determination inclusive of the right to State separation.'

"Accordingly, the right of self-determination will apply to Negroes in the American Soviet system. In the so-called Black Belt of the South, where the Negroes are in the majority, they will have the fullest right to govern themselves and also such white minorities as may live in this section"⁸

"In the Black Belt territory of the South the Negroes are a majority of the population. Any fight for the emancipation of the Negro people and their complete equality must be based upon the right of this oppressed people to national independence and their right to govern these territories, with guarantees for the democratic rights of the minority of white workers and farmers.

"To deny this right to the Negro people is to sabotage the entire fight for Negro liberation"⁹

⁵Central Committee Plenum, Thesis and Resolutions for the Seventh National Convention of the Communist Party of U.S.A., p. 25. Also see Browder, op. cit., pp. 45-47.

⁶Bittelman, op. cit., p. 85. Allen, Negro Liberation, pp. 4-7.

⁷Allen, op. cit., pp. 12-13. Olgin, op. cit., p. 50.

⁸Foster, Toward Soviet America, pp. 303-304.

⁹Daily Worker, Oct. 19, 1935, p. 7.

Self-determination, Communists have emphasized, does not necessarily imply separation. Although under capitalism Negroes would benefit from such separation, under socialism, the advantages of federation would be immeasurably greater.¹⁰

Critics of the theory of "Self-Determination in the Black Belt" have been denounced by the C.P. In accusing Communists of desiring to jim-crow the Negroes, these critics in reality have been endorsing Negro status quo as an oppressed, exploited minority, Communist spokesmen have replied.

" . . . Those slanderers, who accuse us because we raise the slogan, 'Self-Determination for the Negro People in the Black Belt', that we want to jim-crow the Negroes, that we want to separate the Negro people from the white, those falsifiers are thereby putting themselves in the position of advocating the forcible unification of the Negroes, which means their segregation as a subject, oppressed nationality. This is chauvinism, white chauvinism, and when expressed by Negro misleaders, is a surrender to white chauvinism. The Soviet Union, which unites in unbreakable solidarity more than 150 separate nationalities, has proved once and for all that only the free self-determination, the unity by choice, not from compulsion, is the road to national freedom and independence, and to international solidarity."¹¹

Lynch Problem. On the serious problem of lynching in the South, the Communist party has been outraged by the methods of brute violence employed by white Southerners. But it has also opposed such proposals as "Lynch the lynchers!" as incompatible with Communist principles.¹²

" . . . I think it is necessary for us to point out that the whole trend of such proposals as this is to lead us into very serious traps of the bourgeoisie. Our struggle against lynching, our struggle against capitalist terror of all kinds, can be answered only by our taking up, not the forms of struggle of the bourgeoisie which are strong only when used by our class enemies, but by finding our own special proletarian forms of fighting -- always based upon mass action Our slogan must be: Against the lynchers, the mass united front action of whites and Negroes! . . ."¹³

Negro Reformists. Finally, the Negro reformists and bourgeoisie,

¹⁰Allen, op. cit., pp. 21-22. Ford and Allen, op. cit., pp. 30-33.

¹¹Browder, New Steps in the United Front, pp. 22-23.

¹²Browder, Communism in the United States, p. 83.

¹³Idem.

though few in number were regarded as a great menace to the genuine interests of the Negroes. Instead of advocating the unity of white and Negro workers for the overthrow of capitalism, they were accused of preaching petty-bourgeois reformism which would only lead the Negroes deeper into the morass. The Communist party advocated the use of strong measures for exposing them in the eyes of the Negro masses.¹⁴

"The Communist Party points out that the Negroes are also divided into classes; that in addition to the class of Negro farmers, there is a considerable and growing proletariat, a Negro middle class and a Negro bourgeoisie This Negro bourgeoisie has become the thorough-going agent of the white ruling class. It maintains a pitiful 'superiority' to the Negro masses by means of the condescending support offered it by the white ruling class. . . .

"As the Negro masses begin to revolt against this position of inferiority, the Negro bourgeoisie begins to develop special means of heading off and controlling this revolt. . . . They appeal to the Negroes to make a virtue of their segregation, to voluntarily isolate themselves, not to trust any white man, to rely upon themselves alone; . . . Such a nationalism contributes nothing to the national liberation of the Negro people; on the contrary, it is an instrument of the white ruling class, just as is white chauvinism, to keep the white and Negro masses separated and antagonistic to one another, and thereby to keep both enslaved."¹⁵

The Fight for Immediate Demands

In order to become a mass political party, Communists declared that it was imperative for them to offer organization and leadership to the American workers in their day-to-day struggles for better working and living conditions.¹ During this period they maintained that they were active far out of proportion to their number on picket lines, in strikes, in unemployment demonstrations,² in hunger marches, thus inspiring the American workers to follow their leadership in the struggles against capitalism. Communists fur-

¹⁴Allen, op. cit., pp. 24-27. Browder, op. cit., pp. 47-49. C.P., U.S.A., op. cit., pp. 41-42.

¹⁵Browder, op. cit., pp. 47-48.

¹Bittelman, op. cit., p. 56.

²C.P., U.S.A., The Way Out, p. 43.

ther held that these conflicts served to make workers realize that their basic task was not merely to realize specific objectives but to fight against the entire capitalist system which would finally have to be overthrown before there could be peace and economic abundance for all.³

"In determining its line of tactics, each Communist Party must take into account the concrete, internal and external situation, the correlation of class forces, the degree of stability and strength of the bourgeoisie, the degree of preparedness of the proletariat, the position taken up by the various intermediary strata in its country, etc. The Party determines its slogans and methods of struggle in accordance with these circumstances, with the view to organizing and mobilizing the masses on the broadest scale and on the highest possible level of this struggle.

"When a revolutionary situation is developing, the Party advances certain transitional slogans and partial demands corresponding to the concrete situation; but these demands and slogans must be bent to the revolutionary aim of capturing power and of overthrowing bourgeois capitalist society. The Party must neither stand aloof from the daily needs and struggles of the working class nor confine its activities exclusively to them. The task of the Party is to utilize these minor every-day needs as a starting point from which to lead the working class to the revolutionary struggle for power."⁴

1932 Program. A typical example of the immediate demands raised by the Communist party was its 1932 election platform:

"Our six main planks in the election platform, represent the most pressing needs of the million-masses of America. They are:

1. Unemployment and social insurance at the expense of the state and employers.
2. Against Hoover's wage-cutting policy.
3. Emergency relief for the impoverished farmers, without restrictions by the government and banks; exemption of impoverished farmers from taxes, and no forced collection of rents or debts.
4. Equal rights for the Negroes and self-determination for the Black Belt.
5. Against capitalist terror; against all forms of suppression of the political rights of the workers.
6. Against imperialist war; for the defense of the Chinese people and of the Soviet Union.

It is the task of the Communist Party to make the election campaign merely a part of the whole struggle of the working class for these demands, which is conducted every day in demonstrations, strikes, struggles of every sort, in which the widest class forces of the workers will be registered.

³Browder, op. cit., p. 101.

⁴E.C.C.I., Program of the Communist International, p. 80.

The mass fight for these demands alone can build up effective resistance to the capitalist way out of the crisis."⁵

"In short, in every phase of life where capitalist exploitation and persecution bear down upon the masses, the Communist party comes forward with partial demands corresponding to the most immediate needs of the masses. But in so doing, it does not fail to point out that the final solution of their intolerable situation can be achieved only by the overthrow of the capitalist system and the establishment of a Workers' and Farmers' government."⁶

Immediate Demands -- 1933. In the Open Letter to the members of the Communist party (July 1933) the following objectives were set up as the immediate tasks of the party.

"1. The organizing of struggles against direct wage cuts and the reduction of real wages through inflation, for increase of wages, against every form of the stagger plan, for a reduction of working hours with no reduction in pay.

2. Closely linked up with the mobilization against the wage cut offensive is the campaign for the organizing of the struggle of the unemployed and part time workers for immediate relief, and the organization of the struggle for Unemployment and Social Insurance at the expense of the government and the employers. Of the greatest importance at the present time is the task of developing a broad struggle against forced labor and the militarization of the unemployed, in the press, through meetings, demonstrations, strikes, raising the slogans: 'For the abolition of all forms of forced labor'; demanding 'trade union rates upon all public works' and organizing especially within the labor camps and among the workers on public works, the struggle for these demands and for their grievances.

3. For the cancellation of debts on mortgages, taxes and rents of the great masses of farmers; for the abolition of the slavish exploitation of the share croppers.

4. The organization of the struggle against the reduction of veterans' disability allowance and for the payment of the bonus.

5. For equal rights and resistance to all forms of oppression of the Negroes and for the right of self-determination for the Black Belt.

6. Struggle against all forms of terrorism, denial of freedom to strikes, speech, press, and against all forms of persecution and deportation of foreign born workers.

7. Against German fascism and for the release of all proletarian political prisoners.

8. Struggle against a new imperialist war and the intervention against the Soviet Union and against financial and military support of Japanese imperialism."⁷

⁵Browder, Communism in the United States, pp. 98-99. Also see Browder, Unemployment Insurance--The Burning Issue of the Day, passim.

⁶Foster, Toward Soviet America, pp. 251-252.

⁷C.P., U.S.A., Open Letter to All Members of the Communist Party (July 1933), pp. 17-18.

The New Deal¹

The Communist party was among the severest critics of President Roosevelt's New Deal policies -- the National Industrial Recovery Act and allied measures -- which were first promulgated in 1933. Its members were urged to expose these measures on every possible occasion and at every opportunity as a "fake" solution of the economic problems confronting the American workers. Communist theoreticians bluntly declared that, although these measures were aimed to bring economic amelioration to the working and farming classes, they were essentially for the benefit of the great American capitalists; at best they were props to support a decadent, bankrupt, tottering capitalist system.

The main features of the New Deal were summed up under the following categories by Earl Browder:

"(1) Trustification; (2) inflation; (3) direct subsidies to finance capital; (4) taxation of the masses; (5) the economy program; (6) the farm program; (7) military and naval preparations; (8) the movement toward militarization, direct and indirect, of labor."²

Tends Toward Fascism. Despite Roosevelt's affirmations to the contrary, these measures all pointed in one direction, Communist analyses affirmed, fascism:

"The government, with Roosevelt at the head, is trying to save the capitalist system. To save the system makes it necessary to put the burden of the crisis upon the workers, farmers and middle classes. They follow the class logic of their class position."³

"The 'New Deal' of Roosevelt is the aggressive effort of the bankers and trusts to find a way out of the crisis at the expense of the millions of toilers The 'New Deal' is a program of fascization and the most intense preparations for imperialist war. . . ."⁴

¹Browder, Communism in the United States, pp. 114-120; 206-207. C.P., U.S.A., op. cit., pp. 33-37; 46-47. Dutt, Fascism and Social Revolution, pp. 267-271.

²Browder, op. cit., p. 117.

³Ibid., p. 172.

⁴C.P., U.S.A., op. cit., p. 33.

"The significance of the Roosevelt regime is above all the significance of the transition to Fascist forms, especially in the economic and industrial field. . . ."⁵

"All these domestic policies are openly recognized as identical in their content with the measures of professed fascist governments. This rapid movement toward fascism in the United States goes hand in hand with the sharpening of international antagonisms and the most gigantic preparations for war ever before witnessed in a pre-war period. . . .

"The policies of the government in Washington have one purpose, to make the workers and farmers and middle classes pay the costs of the crisis, to preserve the profits of the big capitalists at all costs, to establish fascism at home and to wage imperialist war abroad."⁶

Communists were especially suspicious of the labor provisions of the New Deal; in proposing them, Roosevelt had taken a leaf from Italian and German fascism, where the crushing of the labor movement was one of the first and most drastic moves made.

" . . . finally, there is the movement towards militarization of labor. This is the most direct and open part of the fascist features of the New Deal. The sharpest expression of this is the forced labor camps with the dollar-a-day wage. Already some 250,000 workers are in these camps. This forced labor has several distinct aims. First, it sets a standard of wages towards which the capitalists will try to drive the so-called free labor everywhere. It smashes the old traditional wage standards. Secondly, it breaks up the system of unemployed relief and establishes the principle that work must be done for all relief given. Thirdly, it furnishes cheap labor for government projects, mostly of a military nature and for some favored capitalists. Fourthly, it takes the most virile and active unemployed workers out of the cities where, as government spokesmen have said, they constitute 'a danger to law and order', and places these 'dangerous' people under military control. Fifthly, it sets up a military reserve of human cannon-fodder already being trained for the coming war."⁷

In their day-to-day struggles Communists everywhere regarded it as of paramount importance to expose the fascistic tendencies of the New Deal, to disillusion workers concerning the possibilities of benefitting from it, to make clear that only an intensification of the class struggle, only revolutionary Marxism offered the road out of the capitalist impasse.⁸

⁵Dutt, op. cit., p. 271.

⁶Browder, op. cit., p. 14.

⁷Ibid., p. 119.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE COMMUNIST PARTY -- ANALYSIS OF DEMOCRACY, FASCISM AND WAR (SINCE 1935)

Principles of Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism

During the period ushered in by the Seventh World Congress (1935), the Communist International and its many sections adopted the People's Front orientation. This, they maintained, did not alter their fundamental conceptions of Marxism-Leninism, but simply restated their strategy and tactics in the light of new objective conditions.

As Foster declared, their contention was that:

"The Stalinist policy of the People's Front is the old Marxian-Leninist policy of the united front applied to present day conditions of struggle"¹

They further alleged that the new strategy and tactics would " . . . create the favorable conditions for the overthrow of capitalist rule altogether, the establishment of Soviet power and the building of socialism."²

The State³

The traditional Marxist-Leninist view of the state as an instrument of oppression, exploitation and coercion, and an executive committee of the rul-

¹ Foster, From Bryan to Stalin, p. 331.

² C.P., U.S.A., Resolutions of the Ninth Convention of the Communist Party, pp. 11-12.

³ The reader is urged to compare the views on the State, Democracy, Fascism and War presented here with those expressed by the Sixth World Congress, supra.

ing capitalist class which would have to be forcibly overthrown did not receive emphasis in the formulations of the Communist party during this period. The stress, if at all, was distinctly the other way. In the United States, for example, the C.P. presented itself as the upholder of democracy and the American system, and the foe of force and violence. The conception of a violent overthrow of capitalism, while not repudiated,⁴ was replaced by the idea that socialism would not be ushered in until a majority of the American people desired it.⁵

"1. The Communist Party opposes the overthrow of American democracy. On the contrary, it supports American democracy and urges the widest possible common front of supporters of democracy in order to maintain it.

2. The Communist Party does not advocate force and violence. It is not a party of anarchists, terrorists, or conspirators. By no stretch of the imagination does it come under the terms of the criminal anarchy statute or any law patterned after that statute."⁶

"The Communist Party is not and has not been the advocate of force and violence. . . ."⁷

"We of the Communist Party never did and never will hold to a program of forcible establishment of socialism against the will of the people. . . ."⁸

"Some day, the message of socialism, of communism -- that the people will have true democracy only when the people control their economic destiny through their taking over of the country's industries and national wealth -- will have majority support. . . ."⁹

Democracy: Meaning and Nature

During the period following the Seventh World Congress, the deceptions,

⁴Browder, What is Communism? p. 120.

⁵Browder, The People's Front, p. 266.

⁶Earl Browder, Daily Worker, March 16, 1938, pp. 1,4. Also see Daily Worker, May 14, 1938, p. 6. Browder, The People's Front, pp. 112, 197, 209, 266.

⁷Browder, The People's Front, p. 209.

⁸Ibid., p. 206.

⁹Howard, This 4th of July, p. 13.

shortcomings and inadequacies of "democracy" as the Communists saw them during the period of the Sixth World Congress were also not emphasized. No longer was democracy presented as a mask for bourgeois dictatorship, as the sure road to fascism when the economic contradictions of capitalism could no longer be resolved. Instead it became something worth fighting to preserve; it was now defined in non-antagonistic terms.

Defense of Democracy. Earl Browder presented a simple definition. He declared:

"Democracy is the self-rule of the people, and in the final analysis the rule of the majority. . . ."10

The new problem posed was no longer that of overthrowing the masked dictatorship known as "capitalist democracy". Instead, it was ". . . the problem of finding an effective policy to maintain peace and democracy,. . ."11

. Browder further declared, after presenting the position of the Communist party on war and peace (to be shortly considered), that:

"On the basis of these views, the Communist Party offers its cooperation to all honest democrats, progressives and lovers of peace. . . ."12

Shortcomings of democracy were still pointed out. These deficiencies, however, were not held to be inherent in the nature of democracy and the democratic state, but rather in the threat of the "economic royalists" who were prepared to bolt democracy for fascism when the former threatened to take away the special privileges they enjoyed.

" . . . So long as the democratic forms of government follow the leadership of the oligarchs of industry, the economic royalists, these forms are tolerated and even defended by them. When, however, as today has clearly shown, there is a conscious split between the mass of the democratic electorate, and the economic rulers, then as Roosevelt pointed out in his

¹⁰Browder, Daily Worker, April 30, 1938, p. 9.

¹¹Idem.

¹²Idem.

Constitution Day speech last year, the economic royalists began to question why should they continue to support a democracy which threatens to curtail their special privileges, and they begin to turn toward fascism. . . .¹³

Fascism: Meaning and Nature

Since the Seventh World Congress the Communist analysis of fascism as "the open, terrorist dictatorship of monopoly capital . . ."¹ has remained unchanged; what was formerly said was repeated with added emphasis, in identical terms.²

Democracy versus Fascism. As has already been indicated, under its previous orientation, Communist theoreticians maintained that: bourgeois democracy and fascism are identical in their essential aspects; that the difference is one of form and method rather than principle; that bourgeois democracy breeds fascism; that the latter is an inevitable growth of the former.³

Since the Seventh World Congress, however, Communists have contended that: democracy is different from fascism; that the fight to preserve democracy is well worth undertaking; that the defense of democracy is a progressive step in the fight against fascism.

Browder expressed this new viewpoint thus:

"Fascism is something quite distinct from American democracy, and the difference can be symbolized in the contrast between Hitler and Roosevelt. We have many threatening signs of fascism in the United States, coming from Wall Street and Liberty League sources, which have enormous powers in their hands; but fortunately, America is not under the unconditional rule of these circles, a fact which is witnessed by their rage and hatred against President Roosevelt and his policies."⁴

As a corollary to the People's Front orientation, the Seventh Congress

¹³Idem.

¹Idem.

²Dimitroff, Working Class Unity--Bulwark Against Fascism, pp. 7-13.

³Supra.

⁴Browder, Daily Worker, April 30, 1938, p. 9.

held that the slogan, "Socialism versus Capitalism", was inopportune in the struggle against fascism; "Democracy versus Fascism" was held to be more appropriate.⁵ Communists pledged themselves to defend democracy against the inroads of fascism.⁶

" . . . Today the proletariat in most capitalist countries are not confronted with the alternative of bourgeois democracy or proletarian democracy; they are confronted with the alternative of bourgeois democracy or fascism. Today, the slogan, bourgeois democracy, is a step forward compared with fascism. . . ."⁷

" . . . For the broad masses also, socialism is not the issue today, but rather the issue is, whether to move on the reactionary road toward fascism, or to struggle to maintain democratic rights, living standards, and peace. . . .

"Thus, we conclude that the direct issue of the 1936 elections is not socialism or capitalism, but rather democracy or fascism. . . ."⁸

" . . . It is the main purpose of the Communist Party . . . to further in every way the building of such a united front against reaction. That is why we say the issue is democracy or fascism, progress or reaction -- an issue for which the broad potential People's Front is prepared, upon which it can be organized now, and not the ultimate issue of socialism or capitalism, a choice which the progressive forces are not ready to make."⁹

Foster attempted to reconcile both viewpoints, when he declared:

" . . . The present vital issue is democracy versus fascism, but the struggle tends inevitably to raise for solution the basically revolutionary question of Socialism versus capitalism."¹⁰

Fighting Fascism. While the Comintern formerly maintained that the growth of fascism could be checked and effectively fought only by revolutionary Marxism, by the destruction of bourgeois democracy and by the establishment of proletarian dictatorships, its new position was that fascism could be forestalled and defeated at home by People's Front governments

⁵Browder, The Communists in the People's Front, p. 7.

⁶Cf. Pleck, Freedom, Peace and Bread! p. 103.

⁷Manuilsky, The Work of the Seventh Congress, p. 19.

⁸Browder, Report of the Central Committee to the Ninth National Convention of the Communist Party of the U.S.A., pp. 20-21.

⁹Browder, The People's Front, p. 108.

¹⁰Foster, From Bryan to Stalin, p. 329.

which would effectively rally all the opponents of fascism into a large, all-inclusive, anti-Fascist front.

"The only correct policy for the working class is the one of independent political action in alliance with the toiling farmers, Negroes and middle class. . . . It means the utmost development of the united front of the working class and its organizations and the building up of a powerful People's Front -- a Farmer-Labor Party -- as a coalition of the working class, the toiling farmers, Negroes, and middle class against capitalist reaction, fascism and war. This and only this will mobilize the masses into an effective barrier to reaction and fascism and will thus create the conditions for higher forms of struggle -- for the Socialist revolution, Soviet power and socialism."¹¹

Internationally, fascism was to be defeated by the formation of collective security pacts entered upon the great "democracies" -- The United States, France, Great Britain -- with the Soviet Union.¹² Confronted by such a formidable array of united strength, fascism would be stopped short in its own footsteps and would steadily lose ground thereafter.¹³

War

Defend the Soviet Union. The war position enunciated by the Seventh World Congress took as its basis and starting point the necessity of defending and preserving the Soviet Union at all costs. This could be accomplished best, it was declared, by carrying out the latter's peace policy.

" . . . We must make the defense of the U.S.S.R. the starting point for a broad, general people's front of classes, of organizations and of political parties which are beginning to render the U.S.S.R. active support. . . ."¹

" . . . Today, the defense of the U.S.S.R. determines the main line of policy of the world proletariat in relation to war; whereas in 1914, the best proletarian revolutionaries adopted the position of defeat of one's imperialist government in war. . . ."²

"For us it is absolutely indisputable that there is a complete identity of aim between the peace policy of the Soviet Union and the policy of the

¹¹ C.P., U.S.A., Report of the Ninth Convention of the Communist Party, p. 17.

¹² Hathaway, Collective Security -- The Road to Peace, pp. 3-15.

¹³ For further details, consult C.P. position on War, infra.

¹ Manuilsky, Rise of Socialism in the Soviet Union, p. 54.

² Manuilsky, The Work of the Seventh Congress, p.23.

working class and Communist Parties of the capitalist countries. There is not, and cannot be, any doubt in our ranks on this subject. We not only defend the Soviet Union in general, but we defend concretely its whole policy and each of its actions. . . ."³

" . . . Is it not clear, therefore, that every effort to fight for peace, against fascism, requires in every country that we should take as our basis and starting point the peace policy of the Soviet Union? Is it not clear that everyone who rejects or casts doubt upon that peace policy is helping the fascists and the war makers?"⁴

"The role of the U.S.S.R. is growing as the bulwark of peace among nations. . . .

"The policy of the Soviet Union is a policy of peace. The fact that the Soviet Union pursues a policy of peace is not accidental, is not dependent upon any transient state of things. This policy is organically connected with the very nature of Soviet power, with the entire history of its development, with all that it is and does."⁵

Soviet Union's Peace Policy. The peace policy of the U.S.S.R., directed towards halting the advances of the fascist powers, has become the pivotal point about which all policies adopted by the Communist International have revolved. Its two cardinal features have been the following: (1) Support of the League of Nations; (2) Negotiation of Collective Security Pacts between the Soviet Union and the great "democracies" against fascist aggressor nations.

Support the League of Nations. The Seventh World Congress completely reversed the historical position which the Communist International had always taken on the League of Nations. Although specifically holding that neither the Soviet Union nor the Communist International was strictly in accord with many of the aims of capitalist adherents to the League,⁶ the general argument advanced was that a change in world conditions made support

³Ercoli, The Fight for Peace, p. 57.

⁴Browder, New Steps in the United Front, p. 5.

⁵E.C.C.I., The Menace of a New World War, p. 26.

⁶Browder, Build the United People's Front, pp. 18-19. Dutt, World Politics, -- 1918-1936, p. 320.

of the League not merely permissible but actually desirable and necessary.⁷

In supporting the League, moreover, Communist theoreticians maintained that an abandonment of their former position was indicative that their policies were flexible and capable of moving with the times.

" . . . The most aggressive countries have left the League of Nations: Japan in 1932, Germany in 1934, and the League of Nations, although formally making no alteration in its organization and statutes, nevertheless offers a certain obstacle to the realization of the plans of these powers and can be utilized to postpone the outbreak of war. The Soviet Union took this situation into account when it changed its attitude toward the League of Nations. The entry of the Soviet Union into the League of Nations showed the masses that the leaders of the Soviet Union are not doctrinaires, but Marxists who correctly appraise the relation of forces existing in the capitalist world and who know how to make use of even the smallest possibility to extend their action in defense of peace and in the interests of the revolution."⁸

" . . . The withdrawal of the two most aggressive fascist states, Germany and Japan, from the League of Nations, and the fact that the U.S.S.R. has joined it, change the character of the League of Nations. The possibility is created of opposing the capitalist states which belong to the League of Nations to the fascist instigators of war; the possibility is created of utilizing the League of Nations in the interests of peace . . ."⁹

Collective Security.¹⁰ Although the Soviet Union found it necessary from time to time to conclude pacts and treaties with capitalist nations, the general skepticism, if not open hostility of both the Comintern and the Soviet Union toward these agreements prior to 1935 has already been indicated.¹¹

Briefly stated, these steps led up to the collective security policy

⁷Browder, The Communists in the People's Front, p. 83.

⁸Ercoli, op. cit., p. 53.

⁹Mamulsky, Work of the Seventh Congress, p. 24.

¹⁰For general survey, see Dutt, op. cit., pp. 161-170; 342-346. Ercoli, op. cit., pp. 52-61. Browder, Concerted Action or Isolation--Which is the Road to Peace? passim.

¹¹Supra.

adopted by the Seventh World Congress. In 1929, the Soviet Union signed a protocol implementing the Kellogg Peace Pact.¹² In 1933, the Soviet Union's definition of an "aggressor nation" was adopted by numerous bordering countries.¹³ In 1934, the Soviet Union joined the League of Nations.¹⁴ In 1935, the Soviet Union concluded an Eastern European Security Pact with France (Franco-Soviet Pact) and Czechoslovakia (Mutual Assistance Pact).¹⁵

Communists in the democratic countries (The United States, France, Great Britain, Czechoslovakia -- the "non-aggressor" nations) have been required to call upon their governments to negotiate collective security pacts with each other and with the Soviet Union to put a halt to the belligerent acts of the fascist countries (Japan, Germany and Italy -- the "aggressor" nations). Concerted action is to be taken, if necessary, against the fascist aggressors by a show of collective strength coupled with the threat of applying economic sanctions against them, in order to "quarantine" them.

C.A.Hathaway, editor of the Daily Worker, has said, in support of the Communist position:

" . . . We urged a realistic foreign policy which would definitely distinguish between an aggressor and the victim of aggression, between fascist nations and democratic nations, between nations bent on enslaving other nations and nations striving to maintain their independence. We urged a foreign policy based on concerted action by the democratic nations against fascist aggressors with the aim of protecting world peace and democracy. To that end we urged that the United States cooperate with the Soviet Union, with France, England and all other democratic nations in collective efforts to stop the fascist nations from placing peace and democracy in jeopardy everywhere."¹⁶

"This is a time for clear, hard thinking. It is a time when it is fruit-

¹²Dutt, op. cit., p. 317. Browder, The Communists in the People's Front, pp. 83-86.

¹³Dutt, op. cit., p. 317.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 319.

¹⁵Idem. Thorez, The People's Front in France, pp. 15-16. E.C.C.I., The Menace of a New World War, pp. 31-32. Browder, What is Communism? pp. 173-174.

¹⁶Hathaway, op. cit., pp. 4-5.

less to talk of peace in the abstract. To work effectively for peace today, one must concentrate all efforts around one central aim, namely, to stop the wars that are now in progress, to stop the fascist aggressors, Germany, Italy and Japan. This can be accomplished only through achieving concerted action by the peace-loving, democratic nations, and by a united, world-wide peace movement, based, in the first place, on a united trade union movement.

"The Communists are bending their efforts in that direction. . . ."17

Communist leaders were emphatic in their denial that the application of sanctions, implicit in their thesis, would lead to war. According to their analysis, the very opposite would be the result.

" . . . It is claimed further that sanctions against the aggressors will lead to war and that pacts for collective security and mutual assistance raise illusions and lead to war also. The contrary is the truth. The increasing danger of war arises at this time just because the fascist aggressors feel that they can go ahead with impunity. The greater the number of states, especially the biggest states in the world, which join the collective security pacts, and the greater the unanimity and consistency with which they stand for the real carrying out of such measures under the constant pressure of the masses of the people, the less will German fascism and the Japanese military clique be determined to begin war because this will mean all the greater risks for them. . . ."18

Communists have asserted that they are familiar with all the shortcomings of collective security, which to them is but a temporary tactic in the struggle against capitalism whose downfall alone will solve the problem of war.

" . . . Collective security is no permanent solution of the problem of war, but at the best a temporary stopgap against the immediate menace of war.

" . . . Neither the artificial stabilisation of collective security, if conceived as a permanent system, nor the destructive path of fascist war, can offer any solution for the world problems which gave rise to war, because the conditions of imperialism exclude any solution. The final solution lies outside the conditions of imperialism, . . . The fight for collective security is only a temporary weapon in this struggle."19

A Foreign Policy for the United States. In the United States, the Communist conception of collective security was best expressed by the Ninth

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁸ C.P., U.S.A., Resolutions of the Ninth Convention of the Communist Party, p. 51.

¹⁹ Dutt, op. cit., p. 170.

plank of the 1938 Program of the League for Peace and Democracy which the C.P. endorsed as its own:²⁰

"(9) Demand a foreign policy based on:

The distinction between the aggressors and their victims.

The necessity of denying our economic resources to the war-making, treaty-breaking aggressors and opening them up to their victims under conditions designed to remove the risk of our being drawn into war.

The necessity of concerted action to quarantine aggressors."²¹

The C.P. was especially bitter against those who, opposing collective security, hoped to find peace by pursuing a policy of isolation reinforced by neutrality legislation. Communists scored this aloofness as no way out of the dilemma; on the contrary, such a policy would encourage the fascists rather than restrain them.²²

" . . . We must show the masses that their desire to keep America out of war can be accomplished not by any means of isolation, but by following a consistent and truly international peace policy. We must explain that the only way to fight seriously against war is by the independent action of the toilers against the war makers, using this action at the same time for pressure on the League of Nations and Roosevelt government, in favor of measures for peace and for cooperation with the Soviet Union."²³

"Isolation, no matter how well intentioned, helps the forces of war; makes easier the outbreak of another world conflict into which the United States would be drawn. . . ."²⁴

" . . . the Communist Party is fighting for a peace policy for the United States, for a policy that will keep America out of war by helping the peace-loving and democratic peoples of other lands to keep war out of the world. We condemn the stupid and hypocritical 'neutrality' law, which threatens to drag America into a new world war by directly encouraging the war-making fascist powers. We propose that the U.S. should base its for-

²⁰Hathaway, op. cit., p. 9.

²¹From the Program of the American League for Peace and Democracy adopted by the League at its Congress held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, November 26-28, 1937.

²²For additional statements regarding the Communist party's war position in the United States, see Browder, The People's Front, pp. 73, 185, 273; Talks to America, p. 25; The Communists in the People's Front, pp. 80-88. C.P., U.S.A., Resolutions of the Ninth Convention of the Communist Party, pp. 42-53.

²³Browder, What is Communism? p. 176.

²⁴Ibid., p. 178.

eign policy squarely upon the Kellogg-Briand Pact of Paris, by which fifty nations have pledged us to refrain from war, and upon the Nine-Power Pact which guarantees peace in the Pacific; that whenever any nation violates these pledges so solemnly made, the U.S. shall register that fact, and throw the moral and economic power of this country into the balance against the war-makers by severing economic connections with them (but not with their victims) until peace is restored and their pledges made good. We propose the fullest co-operation of the U.S. with every nation which wants peace, for common restraint of the war-makers, and for the Pacific -- a Pacific Pact of Non-Aggression. We hold that war anywhere in the world is a disaster for all and threatens the peace of all. We hold that only international co-operation along these lines holds any hope for preserving the peace of the world. We give our efforts to organize the people of America to urge such a policy upon our government."²⁵

At the same time, in order to give aid to the "victims of fascist aggression" and to "quarantine the aggressors", the Communist party has urged such measures as the placing of an embargo upon trade, especially war supplies, against Japan, Italy and Germany, and the lifting of the embargo against Loyalist Spain.²⁶

Ludlow Referendum on War. The C.P., U.S.A. has opposed the Ludlow Resolution introduced into the U.S. Congress which, in essence, required that all war declarations (except in the case of actual invasion) be submitted to the people of the United States before any action could be taken by Congress.²⁷

"The Ludlow amendment . . . contributes nothing itself to the prevention of war, and it lulls the people into a false security. It leads them to believe that they can keep out of the present wars now sweeping over the world by a simple resolution at some future date. . .

"The problem today is not how war is to be declared. It is how war is to be prevented.

"The question so far as democracy is concerned is: how can the people be given a greater say now in stopping war, in preventing the United States from being drawn into wars which the fascist aggressor nations are forcing on the world.

"The answer is: give the people the right to decide on our country's foreign policy today; let them decide now between the outworn isolationism which leads to war, or the true peace policy urged by Roosevelt in his

²⁵Browder, The People's Front, p. 273.

²⁶Browder, What is Communism? p. 179.

²⁷Hathaway, Collective Security: The Road to Peace, pp. 10-15.

Chicago speech, the policy of concerted action by the peace-desiring nations against the fascist aggressors."²⁸

International Relations

The Communist party has stood solidly behind the position taken by the Communist International, and the Soviet Union in foreign affairs. Space does not permit an extended presentation of much that is implicit in premises already set forth. A few words, however, will be devoted to its attitude on the Soviet Union and the Spanish Civil War.

The Soviet Union. The Communist party has been loud in its praise of the policies and achievements of the Soviet Union.¹

"The Soviet Union is a living proof of the correctness of the analysis and revolutionary Socialist program worked out by Marx and Engels three generations ago. . . . In a word, the Soviet Union has broken with the age-old system of slavery that has kept the masses for so long in misery, poverty and servitude; it has found the basic solution to the great economic and political problems of mankind and it is now blazing the way for all humanity to that rational and happy system of society worthy of human beings, and for which the best minds of man have dreamed and fought throughout history.

"The U.S.S.R. has been able to give the world this practical demonstration of the validity of Socialism only after the most incredible struggles and hardships. No people have ever been so severely put to the test as the Russian workers and peasants. . . . With their great Communist Party, brilliantly headed first by Lenin and then by Stalin, they have conquered all these difficulties, which the capitalist world had declared to be a thousand times impossible.

" . . . So plain is the success of the new Socialism that even the most backward must recognize it. The U.S.S.R. has become a great beacon of hope and guidance to the exploited masses all over the capitalist world and its revolutionizing influence before them is far-reaching and ever-increasing."²

Economically, it has endorsed the "substantial achievements" of the Soviet Union; it has accepted with enthusiasm the reports of the successes

²⁸ Ibid., p. 14.

¹ Browder, What is Communism? pp. 213-225. Foster, From Bryan to Stalin, pp. 318-320. Stalin, The New Constitution, pp. 19-20.

² Foster, op. cit., pp. 318-320.

of the Soviet Five-Year plans and the increased output of the U.S.S.R.;³ it has hailed the destruction of classes within the Soviet Union;⁴ it has likewise noted with satisfaction the complete solution of capitalism's unemployment problem.⁵

Politically, it has lauded the new Soviet Constitution as the great guarantee of democracy to the Soviet people, and the best and greatest example of genuine democracy in the world.⁶

" . . . Despite the lies of the international capitalist mouthpieces, in no country in the world is there so much real democracy as in the Soviet Union. Nowhere have the toilers such a great political organization as the Communist Party, and their trade unions, cooperatives, and cultural organizations exist on a scale that utterly dwarfs those in other countries, both regarding their size and the breadth of their functions. The new Soviet Constitution raises this fundamental and growing liberty to a higher stage. This document is, as Stalin says, 'the only thoroughly democratic constitution in all the world' . . . The Russian workers and farmers are building the first real classless democracy in the history of the world."⁷

The Communist party has also regarded the Soviet Union as the mightiest bulwark against fascism⁸ and the greatest force for peace.⁹

" . . . The role of the U.S.S.R. as a factor of peace among nations is growing. The peace policy of the Soviet Union is the policy of the whole of the international proletariat and of all toilers who hate imperialist wars and are fighting against them. Thanks to this policy, the U.S.S.R. is becoming the rallying center against war for classes, nations, peoples,

³Stalin, The Results of the First Five Year Plan, pp. 22-23, 61-62. Browder, op. cit., pp. 215-217. Dimitroff, Resolutions--Seventh Congress of the Communist International, pp. 49-50. Mamulsky, The Rise of Socialism in the Soviet Union, pp. 14-20, 23-25.

⁴Stalin, The New Soviet Constitution, pp. 7, 9, 13.

⁵Foster, op. cit., p. 318. Browder, op. cit., pp. 216-217.

⁶Foster, Questions and Answers on the Piatakov-Radek Trial, pp. 36-38. Stalin, The New Constitution, pp. 11-16.

⁷Foster, op. cit., p. 36.

⁸Mamulsky, The Rise of Socialism in the Soviet Union, pp. 37-38.

⁹Mamulsky, op. cit., p. 57. Dutt, op. cit., pp. 310-322. Cachin, Thorez, Marty, The People's Front in France, pp. 81-83. Foster, op. cit., pp. 38-39. Dimitroff, Resolutions--Seventh Congress of the Communist International, pp. 42-43.

and states which do not want war and are not interested in it. The role of the U.S.S.R. as the bulwark of the freedom of the peoples is growing. . . ."¹⁰

Spain.¹ The fundamental basis of the Communist party's position on Spain has been its unqualified support of the Spanish People's Front,² a government which Communists were largely instrumental in creating.³

As positive aid to Spain from the workers of the United States, Communists have urged the lifting of the Arms Embargo by the repeal of the Neutrality Law as it has been made applicable to the Spanish Republican government.⁴ The C.P. has also urged that all assistance to the fascist elements in the Spanish insurrection be stopped.⁵

"The Spanish Republic is fully capable of settling accounts with Franco and the Spanish fascists in a few months, if the foreign armies are withdrawn and outside aid to Franco is stopped. The aim of our campaign is, therefore, to put a stop to the aid being given Franco; direct aid on the part of the fascist powers, and indirect aid on the part of the non-fascist powers."⁶

Among the aids to the rebel forces to which Communists have been opposed are loans, credit, trade; diplomatic recognition of belligerent rights; the policy of "non-intervention", which, they allege, has worked to the direct advantage of the fascist elements in Spain.⁷

American Communists have been active in soliciting funds for non-mili-

¹⁰Manuilsky, The Work of the Seventh Congress, p. 15.

¹Gannes and Repard, Spain in Revolt. Ercoli, The Spanish Revolution. Gannes, How the Soviet Union Helps Spain. Browder, Next Steps to Win the War in Spain; Lenin and Spain; The People's Front, Ch. VIII. Dimitroff, Two Years of Heroic Struggle of the Spanish People.

²Ercoli, op. cit. pp. 19-22. (Compare with earlier statement of Pleck, Freedom, Peace and Bread! pp. 46-51.)

³Lang, Peace versus War--The Communist Position, pp. 24-25.

⁴Browder, Next Steps to Win the War in Spain, p. 10.

⁵Ibid., pp. 5-6.

⁶Ibid., p. 5.

⁷Ibid., p. 6.

tary aid to Loyalist Spain among the anti-fascist elements in the United States. They have sent food, milk, clothing, and medical supplies through the offices of the North American Committee to Aid the Spanish Democracy.⁸ Many Communists have fought in the Lincoln and Washington Battalions and some have been killed, captured, or wounded.⁹

Finally, on the basis of alleged documentary evidence,¹⁰ Communists have demanded that the Spanish P.O.U.M. and the Trotskyists, whom they have identified as one, be suppressed and exposed as counter-revolutionary agents of fascism.¹¹

"One important guarantee of victory of republican Spain is its firm hand in suppressing the Trotskyite - P.O.U.M. agents of Franco, the most dangerous part of the infamous 'fifth column' behind the republican lines. One year ago, they even had their representatives within the government and enjoyed full freedom of action for their treasonable and wrecking work. But when in May they resorted to armed insurrection against the Republic, and built barricades in the streets of Barcelona, they revealed themselves once for all in their true role of agents and helpers of fascism. . . ."¹²

⁸Browder, Next Steps to Win the War in Spain, pp.14-15; The Communists in the People's Front, pp. 77-78.

⁹Idem.

¹⁰Soria, Trotskyism in the Service of Franco--A documented Record of Treachery by the P.O.U.M. in Spain, passim.

¹¹Browder, Lenin and Spain, pp. 14-15; Next Steps to Win the War in Spain, pp. 8-9.

¹²Browder, Next Steps to Win the War in Spain, p. 8.

CHAPTER XIX

THE COMMUNIST PARTY -- STRATEGY AND TACTICS (SINCE 1935)

The People's Front¹

The new orientation formulated by the Seventh World Congress inevitably led to corresponding changes in strategy and tactics.

Abandonment of Social-Fascism and United-Front-From-Below. Since the purpose of the People's Front was to unite all opposition to war and fascism on a broad basis, Communists found it necessary to abandon, for the most part, their theory of social-fascism, their united-front-from-below tactics, and their earlier attitude on the labor party.

During the period from the Sixth to the Seventh World Congress, the united-front-from-below was relied upon almost exclusively for united action. It was chiefly an attempt to win away the following of other working class parties and organizations, rather than to work directly with them.²

Proposals of Organic Unity with S.P. After the Seventh World Congress, attempts at genuine united front agreements were made by the Communist International with the leadership of the Second (Socialist) International and the various Socialist parties throughout the world (the so-called united-front-from-above).³ As a matter of fact, the call for united front was extended even further. Organic unity of the Socialist and Communist parties was urged by the latter.⁴

¹Browder, The People's Front, passim.

²Discussed, supra.

³Sunday Worker, May 24, 1936, p. 7. Browder, New Steps in the United Front, p. 11. Pieck, Freedom, Peace and Bread! p. 80. E.C.C.I., The Menace of a New World War, pp. 4,7.

⁴Browder, Build the United People's Front, p. 42. Dimitroff, Working Class Unity--Bulwark Against Fascism, pp. 23, 51-56, 65.

" . . . we are opening up perspectives for the organic unity of Socialists and Communists in one revolutionary party of socialism."⁵

Dimitroff, General Secretary of the Communist International, set forth the following as the basis of political unity:

"This unification is possible only:

First, on condition of their complete independence of the bourgeoisie and the complete rupture of the bloc of Social-Democracy with the bourgeoisie;

Second, on condition that unity of action be first brought about;

Third, on condition that the necessity of the revolutionary overthrow of the rule of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the form of Soviets be recognized;

Fourth, on condition that support of one's own bourgeoisie in imperialist war be rejected;

Fifth, on condition that the Party be constructed on the basis of democratic centralism, which ensures unity of will and action, and has been tested by the experience of the Russian Bolsheviks."⁶

During these negotiations, Communists still continued to criticize the positions and policies of the Socialist party and its leaders. But the attitude taken was less intransigent and irreconcilable.⁷ Norman Thomas, although still sharply criticized, was no longer denounced as a deliberate deceiver and enemy of the working class, but rather as one whose views were incorrect and mistaken.⁸ Thus social fascism and united-front-from-below, as applied to other working class organizations, were quietly abandoned, since these tactics were incompatible with the new policies pursued by the Communist International. Communists still maintained that their former characterization of Social Democracy as the twin of fascism, not its enemy, was sound, but that changes within the ranks of the Social Democracy made the application of the united front tactic possible at this time.⁹

⁵Browder, New Steps in the United Front, p. 19.

⁶Dimitroff, op. cit., p. 65.

⁷Manuilsky, The Work of the Seventh Congress, p. 31. E.C.C.I., Resolutions of the Seventh Congress of the Communist International, p. 29.

⁸Browder, The People's Front, pp. 167-172, 198.

⁹Manuilsky, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

All-Inclusiveness of People's Front. It should especially be noted that the People's Front orientation went far beyond the united front in its implications and practices. It enlarged the scope of unified action to include not merely working class parties and organizations (the united front), but middle class elements as well: church groups, youth organizations, liberal societies and all others which agreed to accept the proposed minimum, anti-fascist program.

" . . . Our aim in the People's Front is to organize the majority of the people in the shortest possible time, against the worst reactionaries and exploiters, and get the maximum possible control of the government in the hands of this progressive majority. . . ."¹⁰

"The non-socialist progressives may ask, why should we unite with those who want socialism, and who say openly they think the People's Front will ultimately give way to socialism? Our answer is: we grant you non-socialists the right to believe that the ultimate outcome will not be socialism, but in the meantime only our unity and common front will prevent fascism from being the immediate outcome; therefore it is better if we continue our debate on this question behind the common line of defense we set up against fascism which would stop all our discussions. To our allies in this fight against fascism, we pledge the use of democratic methods as the sole means of resolving questions in dispute between us. Whichever of us is correct in the last instance, the interests of both will be served by unity and a common front."¹¹

"The struggle for the People's Front, for democracy and peace, is at the same time the most effective struggle for socialism. . . ."¹²

People's Front Not Class-Collaboration. The Communist party has denied that there is any basic identity between its conception of the People's Front and that of the coalition governments advocated by Social Democrats. The coalition governments aimed at the preservation of capitalism, Communists have argued, whereas the People's Front is the first step towards the abolition of capitalism.

¹⁰ Browder, op. cit., p. 133.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 147.

¹² Ibid., p. 149.

"It is clear that this possible united front government before the proletarian revolution has nothing whatever in common with the reformist, the opportunist conception of coalition government. It has nothing in common with the unprincipled government blocs that have been formed by the Social-Democratic Parties in Europe together with sections of the bourgeoisie. We have not the slightest wish to revive these bankrupt and discredited practices of the Second International. Where this old coalition policy represented collaboration with the bourgeoisie to preserve capitalism from the attacks of the masses, the united front government in our perspective is on the contrary a vehicle of collaboration between the organizations of the masses in struggle against capitalism, of all anti-fascist parties and groups, in the interests of the entire toiling population."¹³

A Step Towards Socialism. Communist theoreticians have further argued that People's Frontism, despite its many shortcomings, is a step towards socialism because of the training it gives workers for acquiring power.

" . . . such struggles will create the favorable conditions for the overthrow of capitalist rule altogether, the establishment of Soviet power and the building of socialism."¹⁴

"Final salvation this government cannot bring. It is not in a position to overthrow the class rule of the exploiters, and for this reason cannot finally eliminate the danger of fascist counter-revolution. Consequently, it is necessary to prepare for the socialist revolution! Soviet power and only Soviet power can bring such salvation!"¹⁵

The Democratic Front. In the United States, the Tenth National Convention of the Communist Party (May, 1928) gave wide currency to a term which largely replaced "people's front" in party terminology. The new term used was the "democratic front".¹⁶

"Such a program that the democratic front requires cannot be merely the random gathering together of the demands of particular groups, but must be hammered out into a consistent set of measures which are adjusted to one another, and meet the national situation as a whole. At the same time the program must base itself upon the most deeply felt needs and demands of the various strata of the population, the workers, farmers, and city middle classes.

"The program must be such as the majority of the people already understand and support, must be capable of rallying the majority of the people

¹³Browder, New Steps in the United Front, pp. 15-16.

¹⁴C.P., U.S.A., Resolutions of the Ninth Convention of the Communist Party, pp. 11-12.

¹⁵Dimitroff, op. cit., p. 55.

¹⁶Browder, The Democratic Front, *passim*.

behind it now. That means it cannot be a fundamental program of the socialist reorganization of American society, for which as yet not even a considerable minority of the masses has been won, not to speak of the majority. The socialist reorganization of our country is not yet on the order of the day as a practical political problem for the majority of the people. What is required, therefore, is a systematic series of measures, of a progressive and democratic character, which can be formulated and put into operation within the limits of the present capitalist society."¹⁷

"The program of the democratic front is not a socialist program. It is the minimum of those measures necessary, under capitalism, to preserve and extend democracy, all those things which have been the heart of the American tradition in the past, ever since the revolutionary foundation of the United States. The program of the democratic front is squarely based upon traditional Americanism."¹⁸

Appeal to Catholics. A characteristic example of its new approach in the United States was the appeal made to adherents of the Catholic faith to win them over to the support of a People's Front program in co-operation with the Communist party. Communists pointed out to members of the Catholic church, among other things, that despite the differences which separated them, their mutual desire to prevent fascism from ravishing the United States was sufficient grounds for them to make common political cause."¹⁹

In a speech before the Tenth National Convention of the Communist party, Earl Browder declared:

"Within the camp of democracy are included the great majority of members of the Catholic Church. We Communists extend the hand of brotherly cooperation to them, and express our pleasure to find ourselves fighting shoulder to shoulder with them for the same economic and social aims. . ."²⁰

"Fascism threatens not only the labor movement and the Communists. It threatens everything progressive and decent in human life. It threatens to destroy freedom of religion and the church, Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish. Surely in the face of this terrible menace, which hovers over America as well as Europe, we should all rise above differences to join hands for our

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 32.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 87.

¹⁹ Earl Browder, Daily Worker, May 30, 1938, p. 6; The Democratic Front, pp. 52-59; A Message to Catholics, pp. 7-15. Thorez, Catholics and Communists, passim.

²⁰ Browder, A Message to Catholics, p. 7.

common salvation, just as we would to meet some terrible natural calamity."²¹

Appeal in Fascist Countries. Communists were also urged to attempt to achieve a united-front-from-below with rank-and-file fascists in those countries where the C.P. was driven underground and its existence was illegal.

"Communists must enter all fascist mass organizations which have a monopoly of legal existence in the given country, and must make use of even the smallest legal or semi-legal opportunity of working in them, in order to counterpose the interests of the masses in these organizations to the policy of fascism, and to undermine the mass basis of the latter . . ."²²

In Italy, the Communist party made such overtures. The following are a few excerpts from its Manifesto:

"Only the brotherly union of the people of Italy brought about by the reconciliation of fascists and non-fascists will be in a position to break down the power of the bloodsuckers in our country and to enforce the fulfilment of those promises which have been made to the masses of the people for many years, without being kept."²³

"We proclaim that we are prepared to fight, together with you and the whole Italian people, for the carrying out of the fascist programme of 1919 and for every demand which represents a particular or general and immediate interest of the workers and people of Italy. . . ."²⁴

"Let us reach out our hands to each other, children of the Italian nation, Fascists and Communists, Catholics and Socialists, people of all opinions, and let us march side by side to enforce the right of existence of the citizens of a civilised country, as ours is."²⁵

Exclusion of Lovestoneites and Trotskyists. The notable exceptions to those included within the People's Front were the Lovestoneites and the Trotskyists. Instead of being called social-fascists, as formerly, they

²¹ Ibid., p. 15.

²² E.C.C.I., Resolutions of the Seventh Congress of the Communist International, p. 33.

²³ Nicoletti, "Reconciliation of the Italian People for the Salvation of Italy," International Press Correspondence (August 22, 1936), Vol. 16, No. 38, p. 1025.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 1026.

²⁵ Idem.

were now venomously scorned as out-and-out fascist betrayers who must be driven from the labor movement at all costs and with whom party members were forbidden to have any "personal or political relationship".²⁶

The American People's Front: The Farmer-Labor Party¹

Necessity in the United States. Because of the unique American Constitutional system, efforts of the Communist party to establish a People's Front in this country have taken the direction of a Farmer-Labor movement. Under the parliamentary system of Great Britain and France, for example, the most essential legislative and executive functions are exercised by Prime Minister and the Cabinet chosen by agreement after election, from among the numerous blocs whose total membership comprises a majority of Parliament. Under such a system, a People's Front government can be formed after the election by blocs which agree to support a minimum People's Front program.

In the United States, where there is a constitutional separation of legislative and executive functions, and where it is legally impossible for Congress to select the Cabinet and control the executive policies of the president, efforts to secure the adoption of given policies, and to obtain a harmony between the legislative and executive branches of the government, must be made before election. Consequently a political party with definite, formulated policies, similar to those proposed by a People's Front government, must be organized to secure the election of its candidates to the presidency and Congress.

²⁶ The C.P. criticism of these groups is discussed in greater detail, infra.

¹ For a general survey see Browder, The People's Front, pp. 155-166.

This explains why the Communists in the United States have agitated for a Farmer-Labor party pledged to carry out a People's Front program, a policy laid down for them at the Seventh World Congress.²

"The building of a Farmer-Labor Party at the present time is the most burning need of the working class of America, of the toiling farmers and of the middle classes. The building of such a party is the only way in which the working people of this country can seriously undertake to improve their intolerable conditions, to shift the burden of the crisis back to the shoulders of the rich, and to ward off the growing menace of capitalist reaction, fascism and war. It is the only way in which the working people can make an effective stand for their own interests in the national elections of 1936."³

"The Farmer-Labor Party, conceived as the American equivalent of the People's Front in France, is taking shape and growing within the womb of the disintegrating two old parties. It will be born as a national party at the moment when it already replaces in the main one of the old traditional parties, contesting and possibly winning control of the federal government from the hour of its birth. What particular name the caprice of history may baptize it with is immaterial to us. This new party that is beginning to take shape before our eyes, involving a majority of the population, is what we Communists have in mind when we speak of a national Farmer-Labor Party, the American expression of the People's Front."⁴

"The growing movement for a Farmer-Labor Party is the specific form of the people's front, which we Communists see as the only hope to defeat reaction. . . ."⁵

Broader Conception of Labor Party. The position taken by the C.P. before 1935 in support of a labor party was considerably different from its support of a Farmer-Labor party after that date. The mere change in title from Labor party to Farmer-Labor party is indicative of a shifting emphasis to an all-inclusive party. Although the Communist party had always solicited the support of sharecroppers and farm workers, the new orientation made necessary a greater bid for the support of farm workers and small farm owners. In other words, the base of the movement was broadened considerably.

²Foster, From Bryan to Stalin, p. 337.

³C.P., U.S.A., Resolutions of the Ninth Convention of the Communist Party, p. 27.

⁴Browder, The Communists in the People's Front, pp. 26-27.

⁵Browder, The People's Front, p. 109.

Formerly, its strategy of building a labor party was essentially "from below". The socialist leadership, the alleged A.F. of L. bureaucracy and other non-Communist leaders of the working class were to be excluded.⁶ After the Seventh World Congress, no such exclusion was attempted. Instead the Communist party appealed to all progressive groups, including the Socialist party and its leadership, to help build a Farmer-Labor party.

Aims and Objectives. The basic aim of the Farmer-Labor party, like that of the People's Front in France, for example, was held to be that of rallying all the forces of democracy against those favoring fascism.

" . . . Our aim in the People's Front is to organize the majority of the people in the shortest possible time, against the worst reactionaries and exploiters, and get the maximum possible control of the government in the hands of this progressive majority. . . ."⁷

"Such a party, of course, will be neither Socialist nor Communist. But it must be an anti-fascist and must not be an anti-Communist party. The program of this party must be directed against the banks, trusts and monopolies, against the principal enemies of the people who are gambling on its misfortunes. Such a party will be equal to its task only if it fights for genuine social legislation, for unemployment insurance; only if it fights for land for the white and black sharecroppers and for their liberation from the burden of debt; only if it works for the cancellation of the farmers' indebtedness; only if it fights for the equal status of the Negroes; only if it fights for the demands of the war veterans, and for the interests of the members of the liberal professions, the small business men, the artisans. And so on."⁸

A tentative program suggested for a Farmer-Labor party included the following provisions: (1) Six-hour day, thirty hour week; (2) recognition of the right of collective bargaining; (3) unemployment, old age, and other forms of social insurance, and relief for all unemployed workers and farmers; (4) a program of public works with the payment of union-wage scales; (5) the opening of closed factories by the government to supply jobs to the unemployed; (6) the abolition of sales taxes and the shifting of the burden of

⁶Amter, A Labor Party for New York Workers, pp. 10-11.

⁷Browder, op. cit., p. 133.

⁸Dimitroff, Working Class Unity--Bulwark Against Fascism, p. 31.

taxes to those with large incomes and fortunes; (7) payment of bonuses to war veterans; (8) relief measures to protect farmers and sharecroppers from evictions, foreclosures, etc., by government loans; (9) measures to help American youth, as sponsored by the American Youth Congress; (10) political, social and economic rights for Negroes, particularly the abolition of Jim Crowism and the enforcement of a death penalty for lynching; support of the National Negro Congress; (11) measures to preserve the democratic rights of all workers and to abolish the power of the Supreme Court to nullify social legislation; support of the initiative, referendum and recall; (12) the elimination of graft and corruption in government; (13) outlawing use of professional strikebreakers, vigilantes and the National Guard to break strikes; (14) support of a foreign policy of collective security; (15) full political and economic rights for women, with special protection against exploitation.⁹

The American Approach¹

The American Revolutionary Tradition. In an effort to win wider support of its program and policies, since the Seventh World Congress the Communist party has endeavored to tie its activities with American history and the American "revolutionary tradition". This is not to imply that prior to the Seventh World Congress the Communist party did not attempt to identify its own activities in this country with an American revolutionary tradition. But the emphasis was not very great. In 1933, however, Browder prepared for the new policy of claiming for the Communist party "the heritage of 1776 and 1861" when he declared:

"We are not un-American! Since when has it become un-American to revolt against oppression and tyranny? Since when is it un-American to call for

⁹Browder, Why Communism? pp. 115-117.

¹Browder, What is Communism? pp. 13-21; The People's Front, pp. 187-269.

revolutionary struggle to overthrow a tyrannical and destructive system? The United States was born in 'treason' against King George and the British Empire. The United States was born in revolutionary struggle. It was born in the confiscation of the private property of the feudal landlords. The good old American tradition of revolution is today kept alive only by the Communist Party. We are the only true Americans. The Republican, Democratic and Socialist Parties are all renegade to the basic American tradition of revolution."²

"Americans have always been able to solve a basic crisis by revolutionary means. In 1776 we smashed the fetters of reactionary feudal rule by the European absentee landlord. In 1861 we smashed the feudal remnants of Negro slavery. With the same resolute and revolutionary determination we must, in 1933, turn to the task of smashing the oppressive and destructive rule of the Wall Street monopolist capitalists who have brought our country to the brink of destruction.

" 'If that be treason, make the most of it!' "³

But it was only after the Seventh World Congress that the appeal to the American workers in terms of this "American tradition " was given greater emphasis and more serious attention.

Called upon to account for this important neglect, Earl Browder attributed it to the sectarianism of the early American Marxists. He alleged that it was ". . . foisted upon the radical movement some generations ago by the sectarian influences that dominated the Socialist Party."⁴

The new approach has been summed up in the slogan, "Communism is Twentieth Century Americanism".⁵ It was, in short, an attempt to fuse Marxism-Leninism with Jeffersonism.⁶

Tribute to Jefferson. Earl Browder expressed his high regard for Thomas Jefferson as America's greatest exponent of democracy -- a democracy which, the former alleged, has been perverted by industrial-finance capitalism

²Browder, Communism in the United States, pp. 173-174.

³Ibid., p. 174.

⁴New Masses. (June 14, 1938), Vol. XXVII, No. 12, p. 10.

⁵Browder, The People's Front, pp. 141, 269. C.P., U.S.A., Resolutions of the Ninth Convention of the Communist Party, p. 35.

⁶Browder, The Democratic Front, p. 93.

and which must be restored to its original path by collective ownership.

It is this path which Jefferson himself would have espoused were he alive today.

"Our program for socialism is organically linked up with, is a necessary outgrowth from, the traditional American democracy as founded by Thomas Jefferson, whose political descendants we are. Let those who try to set off Jefferson against Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, who see in socialism something 'imported from abroad', as 'alien', be reminded that, in the same sense, Jefferson was also 'importing' the theories of democracy from Europe to America, where they found their first and best realization of that period. . . . We are following closely in Jefferson's footsteps, therefore, when we reject all narrow nationalism of thought and program, when we range the whole world to find the best from everywhere. Like Jefferson, we believe that America is entitled to the best of everything, whatever its point of origin."⁷

"Jefferson was the greatest philosopher and statesman of American democracy in its formative period. . . . He was a firm believer in individual private property as the basis for democracy, because in his time this meant giving an economic basis to democracy in which the great majority of people owned their own instruments of production and there were few wage-workers. Therefore democracy must go forward, restore an economic base for itself, in the only possible way, by common democratic ownership of the great social instruments of production -- a conclusion to which Jefferson would undoubtedly come if he were with us today, because he was essentially a reasonable man, not a dogmatist."⁸

"We Communists claim the revolutionary traditions of Americanism. We are the only ones who consciously continue those traditions and apply them to the problems of today.

"We are the Americans and Communism is the Americanism of the twentieth century."⁹

Declaration of Independence. The Declaration of Independence has loomed large in the efforts of the Communist party to make the American workers and farmers revolutionary conscious. Communists have intimated that they, in the main, have been its upholders in this day and age.

⁷Browder, The Democratic Front, pp. 88-89. Cf. Browder, Talks to America, p. 20.

⁸Browder, Daily Worker, April 30, 1938, p. 9.

⁹Browder, What is Communism? p. 19.

"July 4, 1776, was the glorious affirmation of the belief in democracy, in the rule of the majority, in their right to determine their own destiny."

"There were many in Jefferson's day who feared this doctrine, and there are many today in America who prate its syllables but who connive secretly to undermine and nullify it."¹⁰

"America was born as an independent nation out of a conflict that arose between the interests of the masses of the people on one side and the then existing government on the other side. The Declaration of Independence laid down the fundamental revolutionary principle that when such a conflict arises the people have the right and the duty to establish a new form of government to guarantee their future security. We Communists maintain the Declaration of Independence today. . . ."¹¹

America's Revolutionary Heroes. The Communist party has especially invoked the writings and highly praised the deeds of the following historical figures who have helped build and carry on "America's revolutionary tradition": Thomas Paine;¹ George Washington;² Patrick Henry;³ Thomas Jefferson;⁴ James Madison;⁵ Andrew Jackson;⁶ Abraham Lincoln⁷.

Several examples will indicate how these Americans have been held up as patterns which the Communist party has attempted to follow.

"Around the birth of our country as an independent nation cluster such heroic names as those of Patrick Henry, whose famous shout, 'As for me, give me liberty or give me death!' re-echoes down the corridors of time; of Thomas Paine, whose deathless contribution to our national life of a militant anti-clericalism has long survived the many pamphlets with which he fought, the form of which alone belongs to a past age; of Thomas Jefferson, whose favorite thought revolved about watering the tree of liberty with the blood of tyrants (he thought this 'natural manure' should be applied to the tree

¹⁰ Howard, This is 4th of July, p. 10.

¹¹ Browder, The People's Front, p. 197.

¹ Browder, The People's Front, pp. 235, 243-4, 250, 255; What is Communism? p. 15-16.

² Browder, The People's Front, pp. 235, 254, 287.

³ Browder, What is Communism? p. 15.

⁴ Browder, The People's Front, pp. 193, 223, 255, 257, 288; The Democratic Front, pp. 89-92; Traitors in American History, pp. 12-13.

⁵ Browder, The People's Front, p. 287.

⁶ Browder, The Democratic Front, p. 93.

⁷ Browder, The People's Front, pp. 187-196; What is Communism? pp. 17-18.

about every twenty years!); of all the founding fathers, whose chief claim to glory lies in their 'treason' to the 'constitutional government' of their day, and among whom the most opprobrious epithet was 'loyalist'.⁸

"George Washington, commander-in-chief of the victorious revolutionary armies, was the popular symbol of national independence, and of the national unity accomplished by the new Constitution. . . . His role in the creation of an independent united nation was unquestionably of the first order. The honorary title of 'Father of his Country' given him by history is solidly based on historic fact."⁹

"Lincoln carried the fight against reaction to the American masses. He roused them and mobilized them for an offensive in behalf of the struggle against tyranny, for liberty and democracy. In this cause, he called upon the traditions of 1776, as we Communists do today. . . ."¹⁰

" . . . we declare that we are continuing the great American tradition, we are carrying on the work of Jefferson, Paine, Jackson, and Lincoln. We express this fusion of the American tradition with socialism, when we sing 'The Star Spangled Banner' and 'The International' together, when we decorate our platform today with the flag of our democratic revolution of the eighteenth century and the red flag of the socialist revolution of the twentieth century. This is the meaning of our slogan: 'Communism is Twentieth Century Americanism'.¹¹

Trade Union Unity¹

The trade union policies adopted by the Seventh World Congress constituted a drastic change from those formulated by the previous Congress. Based on the allegation that "objective conditions had changed", the policy of building dual, red unions, upheld by the Comintern in 1928, was abandoned. Instead, the keynote became trade union unity.

"We are definitely for the re-establishment of trade union unity in each country and on an international scale. We are for one union in each industry.

"We stand for one federation of trade unions in each country. We are

⁸Browder, What is Communism? p. 15-16.

⁹Browder, The People's Front, p. 254.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 189.

¹¹Browder, The Democratic Front, p. 93.

¹See Browder, New Steps in the United Front, pp. 16-18; The People's Front, pp. 174-181. Dimitroff, Working Class Unity--Bulwark Against Fascism, pp. 43-48; Resolutions--Seventh Congress of the Communist International, pp. 31-32. Foster, From Bryan to Stalin, pp. 268-281.

for one international federation of trade unions organized according to industries.

"We stand for one International of trade unions based on the class struggle. We are for united class trade unions as one of the major bulwarks of the working class against the offensive of capitalism and fascism. Our only condition for uniting the trade unions is: Struggle against capital, struggle against fascism, and internal trade union democracy.

"Time does not stand still. To us the question of trade union unity on a national as well as international scale is a question of the great task of uniting our class in mighty, single trade union organizations against the class enemy."²

Abandonment of Dual Unionism. Communists were instructed to liquidate all dual unions which they controlled and enter into the big trade union movements, even if the latter were conservative and bureaucratically managed. Here they were urged to fight for the reinstatement of expelled members, for trade union democracy, and for the adoption of militant, class struggle policies.³

"In countries where there are small Red trade unions, efforts must be made to secure their admission into the big reformist trade unions, with demands put forward for the right to defend their views and the reinstatement of expelled members. In countries where big Red and reformist trade unions exist side by side, efforts must be made to secure their amalgamation on an equal footing, on the basis of a platform of ~~struggle against the~~ offensive of capital and a guarantee of trade union democracy.

"It is the duty of Communists to work actively in the reformist and united trade unions, to consolidate them and to recruit the unorganized workers for them, and at the same time exert every effort to have these organizations actually defend the interests of the workers and really become genuine class organizations. To this end the Communists must strive to secure the support of the entire membership, of the officials, and of the organizations as a whole."⁴

In the United States, the change in party line was anticipated. Early in 1935, the Central Committee of the C.P. declared that its main trade union task was to build the A.F.L., (and not a rival trade union organization).

". . . We are now able to say very clearly and definitely that the main task of the Party in the sphere of trade union work must be the work in the

²Dimitroff, Working Class Unity-Bulwark Against Fascism, p. 46.

³Dimitroff, Resolutions--Seventh Congress of the Communist International, p.32.

⁴Idem.

A.F. of L., fighting on the basis of trade union democracy, for the independent leadership of these struggles in spite of the sabotage and treachery of the reformist bureaucrats."⁵

William Z. Foster has disclosed that the Trade Union Unity League, the organization of affiliated unions essentially communist dominated and controlled, began its efforts for trade union unity in 1933.⁶ By 1935, a merger of basic T.U.U.L. with A.F. of L. unions had been so successfully effected that the National Executive Board of the former recommended the formal dissolution of its organization, which was soon accomplished.⁷

A.F.L. -- C.I.O. Harmony and Unity. After the development of differences within the A.F. of L. between the forces of William Green and John L. Lewis, which resulted in the formation of the Committee for Industrial Organization (C.I.O.), the Communist party declared itself in sympathy with and for the support of the principles underlying the C.I.O.⁸ Nevertheless it declared that it would oppose all efforts at splitting the American Federation of Labor, the unity of the labor movement in the United States being of paramount importance.⁹

"Our Party has throughout the whole of this critical period in the trade union movement thrown its full weight in the fight to maintain the unity of the American Federation of Labor and against the splitting policies of the reactionary leaders of the Executive Council. . . . We shall redouble our efforts in the fight for trade union unity, for the unity of the American Federation of Labor. . . ."¹⁰

" . . . We continue uncompromising opposition to all the splitting efforts of the American Federation of Labor Executive Council, whether of separate national unions, of locals, of city or state federations. Where splits,

⁵Browder, Communism in the United States, p. 208.

⁶Foster, op. cit., p. 272.

⁷~~Foster~~, p. 274.

⁸Browder, The People's Front, p. 174.

⁹Ibid., p. 180.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 135-136.

are carried through in spite of all, we continue to help to consolidate all expelled unions, and continue the fight for unity and for realizing the C.I.O. organizing program, striving to win the A.F. of L. locals to support and participation in that fight. We will never cease to demand the unification of the American trade union movement."¹

The Negro Question.

On the whole, the Communist party reaffirmed its former principles, strategy and tactics on the Negro question. It still characterized the Negroes as an oppressed nationality and strongly adhered to its advocacy of "self-determination in the Black Belt".¹ It still advocated a militant unity of white and black workers in factories and farms to secure the political, economic and social emancipation of the Negro people.² Its program of immediate demands closely followed the pattern previously laid down: jobs without discrimination and at the same wages as white workers; no discrimination in trade unions; adequate home relief, social security and unemployment insurance; relief for Negro farm workers and sharecroppers from heavy debts and taxes; recognition of the right of sharecroppers to organize for collective bargaining; full civil and political rights, including the right to vote; equality of opportunity and jobs for Negro youth and women; opposition to the subjugation of the Negro people in Ethiopia and elsewhere.³

A noteworthy departure from its previous position came when the C.P. gave its endorsement to the National Negro Congress,⁴ an organization founded in 1936 and composed of varying proletarian, white-collar, middle-class busi-

¹Ibid., p. 180.

¹Browder, What is Communism? pp. 186-187; 189; Build the United People's Front, p. 59.

²Browder, The Democratic Front, pp. 70-72.

³Browder, What is Communism? p. 186.

⁴Browder, Build the United People's Front, p. 59; What is Communism? p. 185; The People's Front, p. 47; The Democratic Front, p. 71.

ness, and clerical elements -- in short, a Negro People's Front.

Formerly, it had characterized the bourgeois elements composing such an organization as reformist, and a definite menace to proletarian solidarity between white and Negro workers.⁵ In voting co-operation with the National Negro Congress, the Communist party now declared:

"Significant progress has been made in building the united front of struggle for Negro liberation. The National Negro Congress, which met in Chicago in February and established a permanent organization, found the correct road to a broad unity of the varied progressive forces among the Negro people and their friends. It is a broad people's movement, which at the same time has a firm working class core of Negro trade unions and working class leaders. Communists and all progressives can well continue to give it their energetic and steadfast support."⁶

"At our Ninth Convention we could note hopefully the foundation, a few months before, of the National Negro Congress, which assumed the task of gathering together such a liberation movement. Today, at our Tenth Convention, we can declare that the National Negro Congress is beginning to realize its tasks in a serious way. It has become the recognized spokesman for the Negro masses, and the instrument of their unity with the white masses. It was largely instrumental in achieving a broad organization of Negroes into the industrial unions of the C.I.O., and permanently influencing that body toward a correct attitude to the Negro workers. It has formulated the demands of the Negro people in such clear but restrained form as to win the attention and respect of the broadest masses of the population.

"We must continue to give the National Negro Congress our heartiest support. . . ."⁷

Immediate Demands

The fight for the realization of immediate demands has still continued to serve the same basic purpose: to give leadership to the American workers in their day-to-day struggles against exploitation and oppression in factories and on farms, to organize them, and to win over large sections of them to membership in the Communist party.

⁵Browder, Communism in the United States, pp. 47-49. Allen, Negro Liberation, pp. 24-27. C.P., U.S.A., The Way Out, pp. 41-42.

⁶Browder, The People's Front, p. 47.

⁷Browder, The Democratic Front, p. 71.

In general, the Communist party's program of immediate demands has differed somewhat from that preceding the Seventh World Congress for several reasons: (1) The issues have been modified in a few instances because of changing objective conditions; (2) the program of demands has been broadened somewhat to make an appeal consistent with advocacy of the Farmer-Labor¹ party and the Democratic Front;² (3) the C.P. has given its support to the "progressive measures" of the New Deal.³

1936 Program. The C.P.'s program for a Farmer-Labor party has already been given.⁴ Pending the adoption of such a program, the Communist party presented the following platform in 1936 as the basis of its immediate demands:

"(a) To improve the material conditions of the toiling masses by shifting the burden of the crisis to the monopolies and the rich.

(b) To protect and extend the democratic liberties and civil rights of the masses.

(c) To break the stranglehold of the monopolies upon the economic and political life of the country.

(d) To preserve the peace of the United States and in the world.

(e) To promote the organization of the power of the working class and its allies for the higher stages of struggle, for the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of socialism."⁵

1938 Program. In the 1938 elections, the C.P. laid down four similar points declared essential to the building of a democratic front: protection of workers in industry; social and economic legislation for the amelioration of the lot of the unemployed and low-paid workers; extension of the "democratic rights of the people" by curbs upon the Supreme Court, public utili-

¹Browder, The Communist Position in 1936, p. 6; What is Communism? p. 114. C.P., U.S.A., Resolutions of the Ninth Convention of the Communist Party, p. 11.

²Browder, The Democratic Front, pp. 32-37. C.P., U.S.A., Resolutions of the 10th Convention of the Communist Party, pp. 10-13.

³Discussed infra.

⁴Discussed supra.

⁵C.P., U.S.A., Resolutions of the Ninth Convention of the Communist Party, p. 31.

ties, etc.; adoption of a peace policy based upon collective security and "quarantining the aggressor nations".⁶

"The slogan 'For Jobs, Security, Democracy and Peace' is the general slogan which sums up the whole platform which we propose for the democratic front in the elections. . . ."⁷

"Our resolution declares:

'The main objective of labor must be to secure at all costs the defeat of the candidates of reaction and fascism. For this purpose labor must strive in every way for the unification of all democratic forces behind a single progressive candidate for each office.'⁸

The New Deal¹

The attitude of the Communist party towards Roosevelt and the New Deal falls roughly into three periods: (1) In 1933, prior to the Seventh World Congress, as has already been indicated, the Communist party took the position that Roosevelt's New Deal was a "program of fascization" which must be exposed and fought at every turn.² (2) In 1936, following the Seventh World Congress, the Ninth National Convention of the Communist Party no longer spoke of Roosevelt as a potential fascist. While it continued to oppose many of his policies, it alleged that the real candidate of the incipient fascist forces was his Republican opponent, Alf Landon, who must be defeated at all costs. It steadfastly maintained that it was giving Roosevelt no support, but preferred to see him elected in preference to his rival.³ (3) In 1938,

⁶Browder, The Democratic Front, pp. 32-37. C.P., U.S.A., Resolutions of the 10th Convention of the Communist Party, pp. 10-13.

⁷Browder, op. cit., p. 41.

⁸Ibid., p. 39.

¹A.B. Magill, "The New Deal: 1933-1938," New Masses (July 5, 1938), Vol. XXVIII, No. 2, pp. 3-6; "The New Deal and Labor," New Masses (July 12, 1938) Vol. XXVIII, No. 3, pp. 17-21; "The New Deal and Labor," New Masses (July 19, 1938), Vol. XXVIII, No. 4, pp. 18-21.

²Browder, The Meaning of Social Fascism, pp. 44-48.

³Browder, What is Communism? pp. 28-29, 52-55; Talks to America, pp. 4-5; Build the United People's Front, p. 27; Report of the Central Committee to the Ninth National Convention of the Communist Party of the U.S.A., pp. 18-19, 24; The People's Front, pp. 84, 102-103, 110-111.

the Tenth National Convention of the Communist Party gave active support to Roosevelt's "progressive measures" and his peace formula of "quarantining the aggressor" which it construed as a call for collective security pacts with other "democracies" to stop fascist aggression.⁴

1936. The keynote of the 1936 election campaign was thus expressed by Foster who declared:

" . . . Manifestly, the task, as the Communist Party has pointed out, was to warn the masses to defeat Landon while at the same time condemning Roosevelt's policies. . . ."⁵

The following are excerpts from statements issued by the Communist party in preparation for and during the 1936 presidential election campaign:

" . . . Thus, we clearly and sharply differentiate between Landon and Roosevelt, declare that Landon is the chief enemy, direct our main fire against him, do everything possible to shift masses away from voting for him even though we cannot win their votes for the Communist Party, even though the result is that they vote for Roosevelt. This is not an example of the policy of the 'lesser evil', which led the German workers to disaster; we specifically and constantly warn against any reliance upon Roosevelt, we criticize his surrenders to reaction and the many points in which he fully agrees with reaction; we accept no responsibility for Roosevelt."⁶

"The Communist Party, therefore, declares that the struggle against the capitalist offensive, against reaction and incipient fascism, demands the utmost unification and concentration of all forces of the working class and its allies in the fight against the Republican-Liberty League-Hearst combination and for the defeat of its plans in the elections of 1936. . . .

"This does not mean the adoption of a policy of depending upon Roosevelt; Roosevelt has proven to be no barrier to reaction and fascism."⁷

"The Communist Party is campaigning, first of all, with the aim to help bring all progressive people and their organizations into a People's Front against Wall Street, against reaction, fascism and war, in a new political alignment -- the Farmer Labor Party. Despite the fact that the progressives in their great majority have decided to rely upon Roosevelt nationally this year -- a decision which we think was a mistake -- yet inevitably they are moving in the direction of a Farmer-Labor Party on a local, state

⁴Browder, The Communists in the People's Front, pp. 37-39; The Democratic Front, pp. 8-9; 11-12, 32-33, 35-36, 43, 91.

⁵Foster, From Bryan to Stalin, p. 306.

⁶Browder, Report of the Central Committee to the Ninth National Convention of the Communist Party of the U.S.A., pp. 18-19.

⁷C.P., U.S.A., Resolutions of the Ninth Convention of the Communist Party, p. 15.

and national scale. We Communists are supporting, we are part of, this Farmer-Labor movement, reserving our independent role in the Presidential elections. Our election platform proposes, not socialism -- which can only come through revolution -- but a progressive platform of aims to be fought for under the present capitalist system by such a Farmer-Labor Party with our support and participation, expressing the general slogan 'Democracy or fascism, progress or reaction'.⁸

1937. In 1937, evidence of the Communist party's support of Roosevelt's "progressive policies" began to appear. In a pamphlet issued that year, Earl Browder said:

" . . . We Communists have, for example, criticized with full sharpness such harmful policies of the Roosevelt administration as its retrenchment on relief, its failure to shift the tax burdens to the rich, and its shameful capitulation to the reactionaries on the Spanish question. At the same time we support all measures and proposals which have a progressive character (such as the wages, hours bill; the reform of the Supreme Court; and the inquiry on rich tax-dodgers), everything which promotes the democratic rights and economic interests of the mass of the people, which is directed against reaction, fascism, and war. . . ."⁹

" . . . As against the reactionaries we are, of course, supporting the Roosevelt course of more power to the federal government to deal with national questions. . . ."¹⁰

1938. Beginning with the Tenth National Convention, American Communists were more open in their support of those measures of Roosevelt which they regarded as "progressive", especially his peace formula for "quarantining the warmakers". They maintained that the New Deal had undergone many changes which made this possible.

"This, in many phases of its activity, but most notably in its attitude toward monopoly and labor, the New Deal has undergone a profound metamorphosis. It is this that has caused the Communist Party to change from a position sharply critical of the New Deal to one of support for most of its policies, while at the same time pointing out their shortcomings and inadequacies. The process of transformation is by no means uniform or complete, but it has already advanced sufficiently to have made of the New Deal the framework on which is being built the democratic front against reaction and fascism. . . ."¹¹

⁸Browder, The People's Front, p. 84.

⁹Browder, The Communists in the People's Front, pp. 37-38.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 38.

¹¹Magill, "The New Deal and Labor," New Masses (July 12, 1938), Vol. XXVIII, No. 3, p. 20.

In his report to the Tenth Convention, Earl Browder declared:

"All the progressive measures of Roosevelt's New Deal are incomplete and fragmentary efforts to apply Jefferson's democratic principles to the new conditions of the twentieth century. . . ."12

"Democracy and progress, the camp of the plain people, the toiling masses, has the advantage of numbers -- the overwhelming majority of the people. To it belongs the future. . . . Within our own country, it has achieved an elementary but unorganized unity, by rallying to oppose the reactionary offensive around the slogans and personality of President Roosevelt;. . ."13

Speaking of the program for a Democratic Front against reaction, Browder indicated that several of its planks could be found among the policies advocated by Roosevelt:

"Several points of such a program have found expression in recent speeches of President Roosevelt, and some are formulated more or less adequately in measures adopted or before Congress, although it must be emphasized that Roosevelt's administration is far from realizing a rounded program, and even falters and fails on many points of its own pronouncements. . . ."14

The Communist party has eagerly accepted a speech delivered by Roosevelt in 1937 as an implicit statement of its own position for keeping war out of the world:

" . . . Such a policy was given historic expression in the famous speech of President Roosevelt in Chicago, last October 5, in which he called for the 'quarantine of warmaking governments' which are endangering the peace of the whole world, . . ."15

" . . . 'Quarantine the warmakers.' President Roosevelt coined this slogan in his famous Chicago speech last October. It made history, probably beyond his expectations, because in this phrase was caught up and crystallized the rising aspirations of the masses of the people to find some alternative to the obviously bankrupt policy which, under the name of 'neutrality', was actually making America a partner-in-crime of the warmakers. . . ."16

¹²Browder, The Democratic Front, p. 91.

¹³Ibid., pp. 8-9.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 32-33.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 35.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 43.

Contemporary Marxian Political Movements in the United States

(end of Vol. I)

William Isaacs

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VOLUME II

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WILLIAM ISAACS

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CHAPTER XX

THE COMMUNIST PARTY -- ORGANIZATION

It is impossible within the confines of a necessarily limited number of pages to present anything but a meager picture of the organization of the Communist party.¹ As one Communist has observed:

" . . . Nothing less than a book about the size of Anthony Adverse could tell you even approximately all about the functioning and structure of the party in the United States."²

What follows is, at best, a brief sketch. The reader is advised to go to the original sources for more information on this topic.

The New Constitution. At the Tenth National Convention of the C.P., U.S.A., in 1938 a party Constitution was adopted for the first time. In 1929, the Sixth National Congress had ratified a draft constitution, but because of internal party difficulties at the time, no further action was taken on it.³

Commenting on the new Constitution, Browder said:

"There is nothing new in principle in the new Constitution. It is the codification of our existing organizational practice, and presents our fundamental program in the terms of modern America, and in the light of the Seventh World Congress of the international Communist movement."⁴

Party Structure--Geographic.⁵ The Communist party has a geographic (territorial) as well as industrial organization. Geographically, it has a national, state and district organization. (The smallest geographic unit

¹E.C.C.I., Program of the Communist International, pp. 87-94. Constitution and By-Laws of the Communist Party, U.S.A., passim. Browder, Communism in the United States, pp. 206-207. Peters, The Communist Party--A Manual On Organization, passim. Ruth McKenney, "Meet the Communists," New Masses, (May 24, 1938), Volume XXVII, No. 9, pp. 3-6; "What Every Red-Baiter Should Know," New Masses (May 31, 1938), Volume XXVII, No. 10, pp. 6-9.

²McKenney, "What Every Red-Baiter Should Know," op. cit., p. 9.

³Browder, The Democratic Front, pp. 79-83.

⁴Ibid., p. 79.

⁵Communist Party, U.S.A., Constitution and By-Laws, pp. 13-19, 23-28.

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is the territorial branch.) Industrially, it has shop and industrial branches, which are units of Communist workers in their shops or industries (the latter where Communists have not yet organized local shop units).

The highest authority in the Communist party is the National Convention held every two years. Delegates thereto are chosen by State and District Conventions on the basis of party membership. It is the body which makes policy or gives its approval to the policies formulated by its executive body, the National Committee. It elects the highest executive officers of the party, the National Committee, the National Chairman, and the General Secretary.⁶

The National Committee is the supreme executive authority of the party between Conventions entrusted with the task of carrying out the party line and formulating policies generally.⁷ It elects from its number a Political Committee which meets weekly and carries on the work of the party when the National Committee is not in session. It also elects a National Control Commission charged chiefly with making decisions in cases involving " . . . Party unity, discipline, or ethics or concerning lack of class vigilance and Communist firmness in facing the class enemy, or concerning spies, swindlers, double-dealers and other agents of the class enemy. . . ."⁸

"Article VIII -- Section 6. The National Committee is the highest authority of the Party between National Conventions, and is responsible for enforcing the Constitution and securing the execution of the general policies adopted by the democratically elected delegates in the National Convention assembled. The National Committee represents the Party as a whole, and has the right to make decisions with full authority on any problem facing the Party between Conventions. The National Committee organizes and supervises its various departments and committees; conducts all the

⁶Ibid., pp. 15-17.

⁷Ibid., pp. 16-18.

⁸Ibid., p. 18.

political and organizational work of the Party; appoints or removes the editors of its press, who work under its leadership and control; organizes and guides all undertakings of importance for the entire Party; distributes the Party forces and controls the central treasury. The National Committee, by majority vote of its members, may call special State or National Conventions. The National Committee shall submit a certified, audited financial report to each National Convention."⁹

Other geographic divisions of the Communist party are the Section, the State and the District Organizations which are composed of the Branches in a designated part of the State, the State and two or more States, respectively.¹⁰

The establishment of party branches based on geographic lines is one of the more recent developments of the Communist Party.¹¹ Formerly, on a par with the shop nucleus was the street nucleus, which was composed of from ten to thirty communists living in the same neighborhood, but not members of a shop nucleus for one reason or another. Its job was to perform for the locality what the shop nucleus did for the factory: lead in the struggle for the immediate needs and demands of the neighborhood.¹² The Ninth National Convention of the Communist Party established party branches composed of all party members living in a given political district. One of the chief reasons given was the need for building the Farmer-Labor party, which would be materially aided by neighborhood organizations.¹³

"The reorganization of the lower bodies along the above lines demands a readjustment in the structure of the Party. The Party structure wherever possible shall correspond to the existing political sub-divisions such as county, assembly districts, state, etc. In the larger industrial centers, wherever conditions are ripe and the Party has the proper forces, it shall establish city or county committees. In the large industrial centers the

⁹ Ibid., p. 17.

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 13-15, 25-28.

¹¹ C.P., U.S.A., Resolutions of the Ninth Convention of the Communist Party, p. 58.

¹² Olgin, Why Communism? p. 68.

¹³ C.P., U.S.A., op. cit., p. 58.

section form of organization shall be maintained. . . ."¹⁴

"The branches of the Communist Party in the neighborhood have the task of winning the masses there for the program of the Party. To achieve this aim, the major concern of the branches should be to link themselves up closer with the problems of the masses in the neighborhoods and, above all, with the organized masses of that particular neighborhood. The branch, therefore, has as its task the penetration of all existing neighborhood organizations. It must make every possible effort to involve these organizations in the struggle for the interests of the masses through united front activities -- (housing, hospitalization, schools, improvement in relief, community centers, etc.)."¹⁵

Party Structure--Industrial.¹⁶ Among the by-laws adopted by the Communist party are the following dealing with Shop Branches and Industrial Branches:

" . . . A shop Branch consists of those Party members who are employed in the same place of employment. Shop Branches shall be organized in every factory, shop, mine, ship, dock, office, etc., where there is a sufficient number of Party members, but no less than seven."

"Industrial Branches may be organized and shall consist of Party members employed in the same trade or industry and shall be composed of those Party members who are employed in places where shop Branches have not yet been formed. Shop Branches shall be organized wherever possible."¹⁷

The Constitution of the Communist International has declared that the shop branch (or party nucleus as it is called here) is the basic unit of the party.¹⁸ The shop nucleus is, for the most part, a secret body, since knowledge of its members and activities would most likely lead to discrimination and even to dismissals.¹⁹ The functions of a party nucleus may be described as follows:

"A Party nucleus holds its meetings regularly every week. Our shop nucleus will discuss at nearly every meeting how to organize the struggle

¹⁴Ibid., p. 59.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 58.

¹⁶Communist Party, U.S.A., Constitution and By-Laws, pp. 23-24.

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 23-24.

¹⁸Constitution of the Communist International, Article I, Section 4. See E.C.C.I., Program of the Communist International, p. 87.

¹⁹Olgin, Why Communism? p. 67. C.P., U.S.A., The Way Out, p. 18.

of the workers against the employer in that particular shop. The shop nucleus will not keep itself isolated from the rest of the workers. On the contrary, it will be the duty of every Communist to be in closest touch with the workers, to be part of the workers, to understand every issue of their shop life. The Communists will distribute papers and pamphlets among the workers. If need be, they will publish a local paper which will expose the evils of the shop and organize the workers for struggle. The Communists will keep secret from the management and the stool pigeons but not from the workers. They will invite non-party workers to their nucleus meetings to discuss certain problems. They will gain the confidence of the workers just because they have a well-thought-out and fitting solution for the pressing problems and because they show resistance in dealing with the boss or with the foreman. They have got to stand up as fighters or else they cannot be Communists. They will soon become known to the workers as a militant group. Many more will join. The influence of the Communist Party will grow."²⁰

Party Structure--Fractions. All Communists are members of trade unions and/or other mass organizations. As members of these organizations it is necessary for them to be guided by the party line, to render regular reports to the party executives, to give leadership within their respective organizations, and to win new members to the Communist party. All this work has been done through the party fractions organized within each of these organizations.

"A Party fraction is the group of Communists within a non-Communist organization. They meet together as a unit, discuss the problems of the organization to which they belong, evolve methods of improving the organization, leading its work, making it more militant and more influential, and always taking their position in the forefront of the struggle."²¹

The Constitution of the Communist International declares:

"In all non-Party workers' and peasants' mass organizations and in their leading committees (trade unions, co-operative societies, sport organizations, ex-servicemen's organizations and at their congresses and conferences) and also on municipal elective bodies and in parliament, even if there are only two Party members in such organizations and bodies, Communist fractions must be formed for the purpose of strengthening the Party's influence and for carrying out its policy in these organizations and bodies."²²

²⁰Olgin, Why Communism? p. 67.

²¹C.P., U.S.A., op. cit., pp. 18-19.

²²Constitution of the Communist International, Article I, Section 6. See E.C.C.I., Program of the Communist International, p. 88.

The Seventh National Convention of the Communist Party, U.S.A. established important resolutions on Party Fractions.²³ It pointed out that since the party fraction represented the party in mass organizations, the conduct and activities of its members were tremendous influences in building the party or retarding its growth.²⁴

" . . . Role of Party Fractions. The Communist fractions in non-party mass organizations have as their aim the winning of the members under their influence and leadership of the Communist Party. The more devotedly, practically and energetically they know how to pay attention to the interests of the members, the better they understand how to link up the fight for the immediate aims with the struggle for the revolutionary goal of the working class, the more easily will they succeed in gaining this influence.

"The Party fraction through its activity must win the membership and the organization itself for a revolutionary class line and for the class struggle (strikes, demonstrations, campaigns, meetings, support press, etc.). At all times the fraction must be conscious that it is representing the Communist Party in the mass organization and all of the local interests of that particular organization must be subordinated to the interest of the revolutionary class struggle following a policy based on the program and activity of the Communist Party."²⁵

" . . . Duties and Functions of Fractions. Every Party fraction must carry through the Party line worked out for the specific organization. All of its work must be conducted from the viewpoint of extending the influence of the Party over wide masses of workers. All the Party campaigns must be brought by the fraction to the masses of each organization. The fraction must win the entire membership and strive to win the entire organization to participate in all mass meetings, campaigns, demonstrations, elections, support of Daily Worker, etc. . . . "²⁶

Communists have been especially active in mass organizations which they themselves were instrumental in creating or in which they have become members.²⁷ They are guided in their work by instructions from the party. At every possible occasion they strive to get the organization to which they belong to adopt policies on war, peace, unemployment, etc., identical with those of the Communist party.

²³Central Committee Plenum, Thesis and Resolutions for the Seventh National Convention of the Communist Party of U.S.A., pp. 72-79.

²⁴Ibid., p. 74.

²⁵Ibid., p. 73.

²⁶Ibid., p. 75.

²⁷Browder, The Democratic Front, p. 69.

As Stalin has observed, " . . . not a single important decision is arrived at by the mass organisations of the proletariat without directions from the Party" ²⁸

In addition to trade unions and cooperative societies, ²⁹ the following are examples of mass organizations where communists have exerted considerable influence: The American Youth Congress; the Workers Alliance, ³⁰ the American Student Union; ³¹ the League for Peace and Democracy; ³² the International Workers Order; ³³ the International Labor Defense; ³⁴ the Friends of the Soviet Union; ³⁵ the American Writers Congress. ³⁶ Although non-Communists have charged that these organizations are completely dominated by the Communist party, the latter has denied this.

The Tenth National Convention of the Communist Party made a drastic change in the methods used by the Communist party in mass organizations when it ordered that all party fractions be disbanded. ³⁷ Explaining this notable departure from its former tactics, Browder declared:

" . . . Experience has shown that for the Communists to work in the mass organizations on the basis of closed fractions, whose decisions are binding upon its members, often creates suspicion among some members that the Communists have some separate interests of their own; such suspicions are cultivated by reactionaries and enemies of the Communist Party. At the

²⁸ Stalin, Leninism, Vol. I, p. 280.

²⁹ Ibid., pp. 274-276.

³⁰ Browder, The Democratic Front, p. 69.

³¹ Browder, Communism in the United States, p. 43.

³² Ibid., p. 44.

³³ Ibid., pp. 74-75.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 75

³⁵ Idem.

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 311-315.

³⁷ Browder, The Democratic Front, p. 70.

same time, experience has also shown that such fractions are not needed to accomplish the aims of our work in the mass organizations, which is never directed toward a 'Communist control', which we do not want, and which is in harmony with the aims of the mass of the membership without distinction of political opinions. Therefore, we have for some time been directing our members in the mass organizations to disband any fraction organizations which may have existed in the past, to cooperate freely with the great majority of progressive members therein, to avoid and discourage all artificial groupings, or caucuses, or fractions of any kind among the members, and to find unity in their work through the normal channels of the organization. . . ."38

International Affiliation. Although the Constitution of the Communist International speaks of the Communist parties of the various countries as its "sections",¹ the Constitution of the Communist Party, U.S.A., does not refer to itself as a "section" but rather as "affiliated with its fraternal Communist Parties of other lands through the Communist International. . . ."2

The policies of the Communist International (also called the Comintern) are formulated at World Congresses held periodically. Delegates to each World Congress are sent by the affiliated organizations. Between sessions of the World Congress, an elected Executive Committee of the Communist International (E.C.C.I.) is vested with plenary power. It in turn elects a smaller body, the Presidium, a permanent body which acts between sessions of the Executive Committee.³

The highest body in the Communist International is the World Congress. The Constitution of the Communist International calls for a World Congress every two years. Actually, however, from 1919 to 1939 only Seven Congresses were called.

No Orders from Moscow. Their international affiliation notwithstanding,

³⁸Idem.

¹Constitution of the Communist International, passim.

²Communist Party, U.S.A., Constitution and By-Laws, p. 21.

³Constitution of the Communist International. See Program of the Communist International, pp. 89-91. C.P., U.S.A., This Way Out--A Program for American Labor, p. 18. Olgin, Why Communism? pp. 71-72. Browder, Communism in the United States, pp. 206-207.

Communists have denied that their policies are formulated for them by the Communist International, or that "they take orders from Moscow", as persons who are not Communist party members or sympathizers sometimes assert. They have alleged that all their policies are formulated by the party itself through its regular democratic channels, in the United States.⁴

"The assertion that the American Communists work under 'orders from Moscow' is absolutely untrue. There are no Communists in the world who would agree to work 'under orders' from outside against their own convictions and will and contrary to the requirements of the situation. Even if there were such Communists they would not be worth a cent. . . ."5

"No, the Communist Party does not 'take orders' from Moscow. The very placing of such a question becomes absurd when we remember that a political party, even so small a one as the Communist Party still is, can live and grow only to the extent that it directly represents, leads, and organizes the masses whom it would win, in struggles for their daily needs. That cannot be done by orders from anywhere."⁶

"We have emphasized here that our Communist Party stands fully on its own feet, makes its own decisions, and is in every sense an American party"7

Membership. Article III, Section 1, establishes the following provisions for party membership:

"Any person, eighteen years of age or more, regardless of race, sex, color, religious belief, or nationality, who is a citizen or who declares his intention of becoming a citizen of the United States, and whose loyalty to the working class is unquestioned, shall be eligible for membership."⁸

Since citizenship has been made a prerequisite for membership in the C.P., a subsequent by-law has made it possible for persons to join the party who have been prevented by law from applying for citizenship:

"It is within the provision of Article III, Section 1 of the Constitution that the following are eligible to membership in the Communist Party:

⁴Stalin, Leninism, Vol. I, pp. 383-384. Bittelman, Milestones in the History of the Communist Party, p. 72-73. Browder, What is Communism? pp. 205-206; The Democratic Front, pp. 84-85.

⁵Stalin, Leninism, Vol. I, pp. 383-384.

⁶Browder, What is Communism? p. 205.

⁷Browder, The Democratic Front, p. 84.

⁸Communist Party, U.S.A., Constitution and By-Laws, p. 7.

- "a. Persons who, by some present unjust and undemocratic laws are excluded from citizenship and disbarred from legally declaring their intentions of becoming citizens;
- b. Students and others temporarily residing in the country;
- c. All persons coming from countries contiguous to the United States, engaged in migratory work, and temporarily in the country."⁹

Applicants for membership in the Communist party who have been endorsed by two party members must sign the following pledge before he is accepted into the party:

"I pledge firm loyalty to the best interests of the working class and full devotion to all progressive movements of the people. I pledge to work actively for the preservation and extension of democracy and peace, for the defeat of fascism and all forms of national oppression, for equal rights to the Negro people and for the establishment of socialism. For this purpose, I solemnly pledge to remain true to the principles of the Communist Party, to maintain its unity of purpose and action, and to work to the best of my ability to fulfill its program."¹⁰

A Monolithic Party. Stalin has referred to the Communist party as " . . . a monolithic Party of the revolutionary proletariat."¹ It is difficult to define this term briefly and accurately; in a general sense it means that the Communist party is a party with a single, well-defined position or "party line" on each of the many questions of theory and practice which it regards as essential to an accomplishment of its objectives. It does not permit any divergence of views or opinions on those questions on which it has taken a position. All party members must conform to the party line which has been established.²

" . . . The Communist Parties are pursuing the uniform line of the Communist International. . . .

" . . . The Communist Parties are monolithic parties and not a 'bloc of trends'. In these parties there are neither factions nor groups as there are in the Second International. . . ."³

⁹ Ibid., p. 29.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 8.

¹ Stalin, Leninism, Vol. II, p. 177.

² Browder, The Democratic Front, pp. 83-85.

³ Piatnitsky, The Communist Parties in the Fight for the Masses, p. 11.

"This gigantic achievement was not secured automatically, nor without difficulties and struggles. . . . It was secured only at the price, also, of uncompromising struggle against all deviations within the Communist Party away from the clear path of Marx, Engels and Lenin. This victory was possible only through the firm, monolithic unity of the Communist Party, under Stalin's leadership, . . ."4

Factionalism. The Communist party has regarded factionalism within the party as the most serious danger to its monolithic unity. In consequence it has removed from its ranks the Trotskyists, in 1928, and the Lovestoneites, in 1929, for alleged factionalism. Stalin's Speeches on the C.P., U.S.A. deal especially with charges of factionalism against the latter group.⁵ In the course of a speech delivered in the Presidium of the E.C.C.I., he spoke of the four great evils of factionalism, as he viewed it:

"Wherein consists the evil of factionalism within the ranks of a Communist Party?

"Firstly, in that factionalism weakens the Party spirit, it dulls the revolutionary sense and blinds the Party workers to such an extent that, in the factional passion, they are obliged to place the interests of faction above the interests of the Party, above the interests of the Comintern, above the interests of the working class. . . .

"Secondly, in that factionalism interferes with the training of the Party in the spirit of a policy of principles: it prevents the training of the cadres in an honest, proletarian, incorruptible revolutionary spirit, free from rotten diplomacy and unprincipled intrigue. . . .

"Thirdly, in that factionalism, by weakening the will for unity in the Party and by undermining its iron discipline, creates within the Party a peculiar factional regime, as a result of which the whole internal life of our Party is robbed of its conspirative protection in the face of the class enemy, and the Party itself runs the danger of being transformed into a plaything of the agents of the bourgeoisie. . . .

"Finally, the evil of factionalism consists in the fact that it completely nullifies all positive work done in the Party; it robs the Party workers of all desire to concern themselves with the day-to-day needs of the working class (wages, hours, the improvement of the material welfare of the workers, etc.); it weakens the work of the Party in preparing the working class for the class conflicts with the bourgeoisie and thereby creates a state of affairs in which the authority of the Party must inevitably suffer in the eyes of the workers, and the workers, instead of flocking to the Party, are compelled to quit the Party ranks. . . ."6

⁴Browder, New Steps in the United Front, p. 27.

⁵Stalin, Speeches on the American Communist Party, passim. Also see C.P., U.S.A., Resolutions of the Ninth Convention of the Communist Party, p. 37.

⁶Stalin, Speeches on the American Communist Party, pp. 27-30.

At the Seventh World Congress, G. Dimitroff expressed himself most forcibly against factionalism within the Communist movement:

"Championing, as we do, working class unity, we shall with so much the more energy and irreconcilability fight for unity within our Parties. There can be no room in our Parties for factions, or for attempts at factionalism. Whoever will try to break up the iron unity of our ranks by any kind of factionalism will get to feel what is meant by the Bolshevik discipline that Lenin and Stalin have always taught us. . . ."⁷

Democratic Centralism.⁸ An important corollary of the Communist party's monolithism is its conception of "democratic centralism". The latter term implies a thoroughgoing democracy in the organization and administration of the party, and in the formulation of its policies. The Communist party has maintained that its inner-party democracy is a reality, in theory as well as in practice; that all party members, from the highest to the lowest, participate in the determination of the "party line".

"This Communist Party is organized on the principle of democratic-centralism. That means that the leadership of the party is elected from below, from the membership units of the party, in a delegated party convention, which is the supreme authority of the party. The convention adopts the program and elects a Central Committee, which exercises full power of direction of the party between conventions. Below the Central Committee, and subordinated to it, are twenty-nine District Committees, elected by District Conventions; the Districts are similarly subdivided into Sections; the Sections are based directly upon the membership units (or nuclei).

"This system of democratic-centralism accomplishes two vital aims of Communist organization. It achieves a united party, motivated by a uniform strategy and tactic, uniting tens of thousands of wills into a single will, concentrating into one great proletarian fist that multitude of individual forces that would otherwise cancel one another by disunity and confusion. Secondly, it achieves this not by blotting out of individual participation and initiative, but by broadening and deepening inner democracy, by organizing it."⁹

As an answer to those persons who deny the existence of genuine democracy within the party, Communists have pointed to Article VIII, Section 3

⁷E.C.C.I., Resolutions--Seventh Congress of the Communist International, p.13.

⁸See Browder, What is Communism? pp. 206-207. Foster, Toward Soviet America, p. 143. Constitution of the Communist International, Article I, Section 5. Olgin, Why Communism? p. 70.

⁹Browder, What is Communism? pp. 206-207.

of their Constitution which declares:

"For two months prior to the Convention, discussions shall take place in all Party organizations on the main resolutions and problems coming before the Convention. During this discussion all Party organizations have the right and duty to adopt resolutions and amendments to the Draft Resolutions of the National Committee for consideration at the Convention."¹⁰

Speaking before the Tenth National Convention of the Communist Party, U.S.A., Earl Browder commented upon the democratic features of the convention as one evidence of party democracy:

"In keeping with our broad, clear, democratic program, we have conducted the work of this convention -- not with mere surface democracy -- but the living democracy of collective work, as we learned its meaning from our great teachers, Lenin and Stalin."¹¹

" 'Every man or woman at this convention had an opportunity to make his or her contribution,. . . I don't think there is another organization of any kind that has the practical working out of democracy that this convention has shown.' "¹²

Discipline. After the "party line" has been established, all party members, regardless of whether or not they were in agreement with the position taken before its adoption, are bound to carry it out, and abstain from criticizing it, publicly or within the party. Theoretically, there exists the right of raising anew for discussion questions already established as the party position. (In practice, there is, of course, the danger of having such conduct declared factionalism or breach of party discipline.) Members accused of any breach of discipline are tried before the proper party authorities. The extreme penalty is expulsion from the party.¹

"Party questions may be discussed by the members of the Party and by Party organizations until such time as a decision is taken upon them by the competent Party organs. After such a decision has been taken by the Congress of the Communist International, by the Congress of the respective Sections,

¹⁰Communist Party, U.S.A., Constitution and By-Laws, p. 16.

¹¹Daily Worker, June 1, 1938, p. 1.

¹²Idem.

¹Communist Party, U.S.A., Constitution and By-Laws, pp. 19-20.

or by leading committees of the Comintern, and of its various Sections, the decision must be unreservedly carried out even if a party of the Party membership or of the local Party organizations are in disagreement with it."²

"Unlike the Social-Democratic, Second International, each section of which submits to the discipline of 'its own' national bourgeoisie and of its 'fatherland', the Sections of the Communist International submit to only one discipline, viz., international proletarian discipline, which guarantees victory in the struggle of the world's workers for world proletarian dictatorship. . . ."³

Self-Criticism. As a check upon the correctness of its general policies, the Communist party has declared that it engages in periodic re-evaluations of its strategy and tactics, and also the manner in which these have been carried out by the party leaders and membership. Communists call this the "Practice of Bolshevik Self-Criticism".⁴

Stalin has declared that party members must learn from their own mistakes, and they cannot do this unless they are prepared to admit their mistakes and take the proper steps to rectify them.⁵ He has quoted from Lenin to show the importance of this self-criticism:

" 'The attitude of a political party toward its own mistakes is one of the most important and surest criteria of the seriousness of the party, and of how it fulfills, in practice, its obligations toward its class and toward the masses of working people. To admit a mistake openly, to disclose its reasons, to analyze the conditions which gave rise to it, to study attentively the means of correcting it -- these are the signs of a serious party; this means the performance of its duties, this means educating and training the class, and, subsequently, the masses.' "⁶

Commenting on this, Stalin has observed:

"This means that the Bolsheviks are in duty bound not to gloss over their mistakes, not to dodge the question of their mistakes, as often happens with us, but honestly and openly to admit their mistakes, honestly and openly to indicate the way of correcting these mistakes, honestly and openly to correct them.

²Constitution of the Communist International, Article I, Section 5. See E.C.C.I., Program of the Communist International, p. 88.

³E.C.C.I., Program of the Communist International, p. 85.

⁴S. Tsirul, The Practice of Bolshevik Self-Criticism, *passim*. Stalin, Mastering Bolshevism, pp. 47-53. Browder, Communism in the United States, pp. 76-79, 89.

⁵Stalin, op. cit., p. 48.

⁶Lenin, quoted in Stalin, op. cit., p. 49.

"I would not say that many of our comrades undertake this business with satisfaction. But if the Bolsheviks really wish to be Bolsheviks they must find sufficient manliness in themselves openly to admit their mistakes, to reveal their causes, to indicate the way of correcting them, and thereby to give the Party cadres correct training and correct political education.

"For it is only on this path, only by open and honest self-criticism, that Bolshevik cadres really can be educated, that real Bolshevik leaders can be educated."⁷

Self-criticism in the past has dealt with such matters as Party work in factories, the growth and fluctuation of party membership, the fight against Party bureaucracy,⁸ and other phases of party work. While no phase of party theory or practice has ever been declared exempt from self-criticism, this type of activity in the past has been confined, for the most part, to evaluation of concrete party tasks rather than to a re-examination of fundamental principles, strategy or tactics, critics of the party have charged.

Education and Propaganda.⁹ The Communist party publishes more pamphlets and books each year than any other Marxian organization in the United States. The pamphlets are printed by the party press and are distributed to party members through unit meetings and to the public at large through a chain of Workers Bookshops located in the large cities of the United States. Many important larger theoretical works also setting forth the position of the Communist party are published by the International Publishers.

The Party conducts several English daily newspapers, notably the Daily Worker, and many others in foreign languages. It also publishes theoretical magazines for party members and persons interested in detailed studies of its principles, strategy and tactics, notably, The Communist, The Communist International, The Young Communist Review, The Party Organizer.

⁷Stalin, op. cit., pp. 49-50.

⁸Tsirul, op. cit., pp. 5-6.

⁹McKenney, "What Every Red-Baiter Should Know," New Masses (May 31, 1938), Vol. XXVII, No. 10, P. 9.

In order to teach its members and sympathizers the principles of Marxism-Leninism as interpreted by the Communist party, a series of Workers Schools has been established throughout the United States where numerous courses are conducted on all phases of economics, politics, history and public speaking, all presented from a definite viewpoint. In addition, special schools exist where leaders are trained in all phases of party work.

The Young Communist League. The Young Communist League, an affiliate of the Young Communist International, is an organization of young men and women between the ages of 16 and 30 years.¹ Although organizationally separate and distinct from the Communist party, it is under the latter's guidance and direction, and has ties which bind it to the principles and policies formulated by the Communist International and the Communist party.²

The Y.C.L. has attempted to serve two significant purposes: to organize the youth of America and give leadership for the attainment of such objectives as education, jobs, peace, etc.; to provide a source of potential members for the Communist party,³ trained in the principles of Marxism-Leninism, and prepared to assume posts of leadership in the youth movement or in the party itself, if their abilities warrant it.

The history of the Y.C.L. parallels the history of the Communist party itself. For this reason the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International also marked a significant milepost in the organization and activities of the Young Communist League. In addition to the changes in the "line" which were almost identical with those in the Communist party proper, the approach to American youth was shifted somewhat. Formerly the emphasis

¹For organizations of the YCL see Where We Stand--Declaration of Principles of the Young Communist League of the U.S.A.

²C.P., U.S.A., The Way Out, p. 19.

³Idem.

was almost exclusively upon the serious task of producing trained and competent young Marxists-Leninists. Since the Seventh World Congress, efforts have also been made to make membership in the Y.C.L. more interesting and attractive. Greater emphasis has been placed upon athletics, dances, and other social activities. Communists have held that this approach has made it possible to reach a greater number of young people.

Besides its own organization, members of the Young Communist League have also been active in non-Communist youth movements, chiefly the American Student Union and the American Youth Congress. In this manner, the Y.C.L. has hoped to give guidance to the youth of America in what it regards as the correct orientation on current problems. In general its approach has been that of building a young people's front paralleling that of the C.P.

For details of the manner in which the Young Communist League is attempting to carry on its work in mass youth organizations, the reader is referred to its literature.⁴

Problems of Party Building. Perennial discussions and much party literature have been devoted to the question of building a mass party.¹ The following are the principal questions involved, as evidenced by the literature issued: rooting the party in the basic industries;² work in mass organizations;³ gaining new recruits to the party;⁴ educating party members in Marxism-Leninism;⁵ winning party support among the middle class,⁶ Ne-

⁴Young Communist League, We Take Our Stand--Declaration of Principles and By-Laws. Green, United We Stand For Peace and Socialism; Make Your Dreams Come True. Little, Wake Up and Live. Kuusinen, Youth and Fascism. Michal, Youth Marches Toward Socialism. Doran, Get Wise--Organize.

¹Browder, The Democratic Front, pp. 59-86. Bittelman, Problems of Party Building passim.

²Browder, Communism in the United States, pp. 134-136.

³C.P. U.S.A., Resolutions of the Ninth Convention of the Communist Party, pp. 62-63. Browder, The Democratic Front, pp. 69-70.

⁴Bittelman, Milestones in the History of the Communist Party, p. 12; Problems of Party Building, pp. 6, 15-18.

⁵Stalin, Mastering Bolshevism, pp. 37-39. Browder, Communism in the United States, pp. 89-90.

groes,⁷ women,⁸ youth⁹ and farmers;¹⁰ building the Daily Worker and other party publications.¹¹ The reader is referred to this literature for detailed analyses and discussions.

⁶Hicks, I Like America.

⁷Browder, Communism in the United States, pp. 44-49, 170; The Democratic Front, pp. 70-72. Ford and Allen, The Negroes in a Soviet America, passim.

⁸Pleck, Freedom, Peace and Bread! p. 72. Browder, The Democratic Front, pp. 75-76.

⁹Browder, Communism in the United States, pp. 49-51; The Democratic Front, pp. 76-77.

¹⁰Browder, Communism in the United States, p. 170; The Democratic Front, pp. 73-74.

¹¹C.P., U.S.A., Resolutions of the Ninth Convention of the Communist Party, pp. 36-37. Hathaway and Don, Why a Workers' Daily Press? passim. Browder, Communism in the United States, pp. 72-73, 90.

CHAPTER XXI

THE COMMUNIST PARTY -- CRITICISM OF THE SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY

The Communist party has never regarded the Socialist Labor party as a serious rival in its own effort to win over the American workers to an acceptance of what it regards as the correct principles of Marxism. In consequence, the amount of criticism devoted to that movement has been relatively small.

In the main, criticism of the S.L.P. follows these lines:¹ (1) Its faulty conceptions of the state which are more syndicalist than Marxian; its opposition to dictatorship of the proletariat; its reliance upon constitutional methods of peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism. (2) Its faulty conceptions of the role of industrial unions in capitalist and socialist societies. (3) Its hostility to the Soviet Union. (4) Its sectarianism in strategy and tactics.

The present discussion of the C.P.'s criticism of the S.L.P. will in the main follow this order of presentation.

Conception of the State

Syndicalist in Approach. The first criticism made by the C.P. is that De Leon's conception of the state is non-Marxian in its essential aspects. The state, according to the Marxist-Leninist interpretation, is an executive

¹Olgin, Capitalism Defends Itself through the Socialist Labor Party, passim. Foster, From Bryan to Stalin, pp. 33-36. Burke, "De Leonism in the Light of Marxism-Leninism", The Communist (March, 1934) Vol. XIII, No. 3, pp. 302-310; The Communist (April, 1934), Vol. XIII, No. 4, pp. 405-416.

committee of the dominant, ruling class to coerce and oppress all other classes in order to guarantee its own hegemony. According to De Leon, Communists have held, the state assumes functions of exploitation and oppression only at an advanced stage of capitalist development, before that being " 'the Central Directing Authority', 'aiding and directing production' ".²

Even more significant is the Communist party's further allegation that the S.L.P.'s position is syndicalist. Marxism, the C.P. has maintained, recognizes that the Marxian political party must play a dominant role under capitalism in preparing for the coming struggle for power, and after the conquest of power, during the transition to socialism. The S.L.P. has minimized the role of the Marxian political party in both instances, the C.P. has charged, thus allying itself with the philosophy of syndicalism, and not Marxism, despite its denial.

"The essential syndicalist character of De Leon's whole outlook is clear. In his theories the basic organs of the working class are the labor unions. As for the Party, its role is only a secondary one, instead of one of central, decisive leadership. The whole revolutionary struggle is reduced practically to a trade union question. . . .

"De Leonism is not Marxism. It is basically Syndicalism in the making. It has nothing in common with the Marxist-Leninist conception of the Party, so brilliantly justified by the experience of the Russian revolution of the workers' party (the Communist Party) as the leader, organizer and vanguard of the working class and its allies in their daily battle under capitalism for minor demands, in their revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist system, and in their construction of a Socialist society."³

Inadequacy of the Ballot. In their criticisms written prior to the Seventh World Congress, especially, Communists rejected the S.L.P.'s conception of the conquest of power. They ridiculed the notion that any transition to socialism could be peacefully effected; they maintained that the capitalists had too much at stake to surrender to any constitutionally elected

²Burke, op. cit., p. 410.

³Foster, op. cit., pp. 35-36.

authorities; they also questioned whether it was possible to obtain any constitutional majority, because the technique of education and propaganda, and the electoral machinery, were almost exclusively controlled by the capitalists.⁴

"The workers cannot free themselves by the ballot though they recognize the importance of the ballot as an expression of mass protest. That Constitution of the United States, so beloved by the S.L.P., is nothing but a play-ball in the hands of the ruling class. When it is in their interests they use the sham of democracy. When their profits are menaced, they set their constitution aside, using brute force. . . . The S.L.P., by trying to pin the faith of the workers on the Constitution of the United States and the possibility and probability of receiving a mandate for Socialism by the ballot, is betraying the workers to the capitalists."⁵

Rejection of Proletarian Dictatorship. Likewise, the denial of the dictatorship of the proletariat by the S.L.P. evoked similar allegations of non-Marxism from the Communist party. The latter held that the Socialist Labor party had put itself outside of the pale of Marxism by the position it had taken.

"The denial of the need of the dictatorship of the proletariat, of a forceful overthrow of the bourgeoisie, which is the main essence of Marxism, was the chief work of the revisionists of the Second International. Lenin and the Bolsheviks were the only ones that fought this revisionism, this 'making Marxism acceptable to the bourgeoisie'. They are the only ones who resuscitated Marx's teachings on this question from the garbage heap of the Second International."⁶

Conception of Industrial Unionism

The Communist party has criticized the De Leonist conception of the Industrial Union from at least two important angles: its static role under capitalism; its exaggerated importance under socialism.

Static Role under Capitalism. Communists have argued that in failing to advance a program of immediate labor objectives for the working class, the

⁴Ibid., pp. 34-35. Olgin, op. cit., pp. 4-6, 11-12, 21-22.

⁵Olgin, op. cit., pp. 11-12.

⁶Burke, op. cit., p. 414.

S.L.P. has deprived the Industrial Unions of one of their most significant functions. (The Communist party has maintained that in organizing workers to fight for such things as higher wages and shorter hours they are making workers class conscious, winning them over to the class struggle, and preparing them for the larger conflict with capitalism.) The result under the S.L.P.'s conception of Industrial Unions is that the latter are merely organized and they must idly await the conquest of the state by the electorate at the polls before they have any functions to perform. This kind of industrial unionism makes growth difficult and disintegration easy, the C.P. has held.¹

" . . . Oh, the S.L.P. men have prepared a grand task for their grand industrial unions! The industrial union must prepare for a time when it will take over the industry from the capitalists and manage it in the interests of all. . . .

"The plan is complete. You organize labor unions, industrial unions, not for struggle but to be pickled and preserved until after the social revolution. This social revolution is to be secured through the ballot. The industrial unions are to be turned into study classes to learn 'all about' what their activities should be after the social revolution. When a majority of the people of the United States have voted in favor of Socialism then the Industrial Union steps in and makes Socialism. Until then it won't engage in any sporadic struggles. It will just sit tight and wait for the ballot to pave it the way."²

Industrial Union Inadequate after Capture of Power. After a socialist revolution has been accomplished, the Communist party has argued, it will not be possible simply to hand over the new social order to the Industrial Unions. Too many problems will have to be solved which will require a strongly organized political party of the proletariat whose chief duty will be to destroy the persisting counter-revolutionary activities of the disfranchised capitalists.

" . . . De Leon taught that once the revolution was accomplished the Party would instantly dissolve itself and turn the management of the presumably immediately peaceful society over to the industrial unions. This was

¹Olgin, op. cit., p. 11.

²Ibid., p. 8.

a further glorification of the role of the unions and minimizing of that of the Party. It was also an expression of De Leon's misapprehension of the transition period from capitalism to Socialism, the era of the dictatorship of the proletariat and a time of acute class struggle against the remnants of the defeated classes. . . .³

Neglect of A.F.L. Members. The criticism of De Leon's trade union policies by the Communist party was not directed at his advocacy of dual unionism as such, but at his neglect of organizational work in the more conservative unions. In so acting, he left the majority of the rank-and-file workers at the mercies of the conservative A.F.L. leaders in the existing unions, the C.P. charged.

"Here De Leon's mistake lies not in establishing separate unions. His mistake was that he established sectarian unions, not unions on the basis of mass movements, but on the basis of a small number of revolutionaries disconnected from the unorganized workers in the factories and that he discontinued work in the old unions, leaving the workers in these organizations under the influence of reactionary leaders. . . ."⁴

Hostility Towards the Soviet Union

Another indictment drawn up against the S.L.P. by the C.P. is the former's antagonism towards the October revolution and the Soviet Union.

"When the October Revolution took place the revolutionary proletariat of the world hailed it with great enthusiasm, rallied to support it, and saw in it an example for all the workers to follow. The S.L.P. took an indifferent attitude, stating that the dictatorship of the proletariat might be all right for backward Russia but that the American proletariat had nothing to learn from it.

"After the October Revolution, in the period when the best elements within the parties of the Second International, under the leadership of Lenin and the Bolsheviks, split from the opportunism of their parties and the Second International, declaring themselves for the Third International, the S.L.P. was not among these advanced revolutionary workers. It split organizationally with the Second International, but stayed aloof from the Third International, heaping abuse and ridiculing the 21 points of admission to the Comintern."¹

". . . The S.L.P. does not dare to come out openly against the Russian

³Foster, op. cit., p. 35.

⁴Burke, op. cit., pp. 309-310.

¹Burke, op. cit., p. 415.

Revolution, but it makes it clear that the 'Socialist leaders of Russia' 'cannot possibly grasp the situation nor comprehend the necessary tactics in a country where social, political and industrial development has prepared the ground so thoroughly for the Socialist revolution and Socialist reconstruction of society as is the case with the United States.' The Communist International, don't you see, does not understand America. The S.L.P. fossils understand America. . . .²

De Leon and Lenin. Communists have scoffed at the idea that Leninism owes any of its doctrines to the principles of Daniel De Leon. On fundamentals, they have asserted, Lenin and De Leon were poles apart, despite the statement attributed to Lenin by the Socialist Labor party that Lenin was profoundly influenced by De Leon's industrial unionism.

"The truth is that, while De Leon deserves recognition for his adamant hatred of capitalism, for his struggle against the union bureaucracy, for his advocacy of industrial unionism, for his insistence on party discipline, and for his denunciation of reformism, he was the opposite of Lenin not only as regards mass movement, closeness to the masses, understanding of the role of the Party as a vanguard of broad masses, but also as regards the theory of revolution, the view on the seizure of power."³

"De Leon, is, fundamentally, opposed to Leninism, although Lenin may have valued the idea of an industrial union, as reported by the late John Reed. And certainly the S.L.P. as it was created on the basis of De Leonism is a travesty upon revolutionary Socialism and a travesty upon Marxism-Leninism. . . ."⁴

Sectarianism

All in all, the C.P. has concluded, the refusal of the S.L.P. to fight for a program of immediate needs of the working class, its refusal to engage in practical trade union activities, and its failure to do trade union work in conservative unions, brand it as hopelessly sectarian. Its demand for "the unconditional surrender of capitalism" while nominally super-revolutionary, has actually played into the hands of the reactionaries and is the best guarantee capitalists have for maintenance of the status quo.¹

²Olgin, op. cit., p. 23.

³Olgin, op. cit., p. 36.

⁴Ibid., p. 37-38.

¹Olgin, op. cit., pp. 8-9, 38.

"De Leon was the father of that sectarianism which made the S.L.P. a museum specimen."²

"De Leonism leads not to the revolution, but away from it. Its end-product, the present day S.L.P., is a counter-revolutionary group, the very worst expression of the American sectarianism that Marx and Engels noted long ago. It is an enemy of the Soviet Union and of everything vital and revolutionary in the labor movement. It is the most isolated, sterile and futile national party ever produced by the American working class; a pitiful monument indeed to the sincere and courageous fighter, De Leon."³

²Ibid., p. 37.

³Foster, op. cit., p. 36.

CHAPTER XXII

THE COMMUNIST PARTY -- CRITICISM OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY

The Communist party's critical analysis of the Second Socialist International and the Socialist Party of the United States falls into two sharp divisions: prior to the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International (1935); since 1935. In some instances the same basic criticisms have persisted; in others, they have been modified to conform with the new party line laid down by the Seventh World Congress.

Criticism of the Second Socialist International -- Prior to 1935

The Communist International (including its American section) has made the following major indictments of the Second Socialist International: (1) Its non-Marxian conception of the road to power. (2) Its defense of democracy. (3) Its theory of the "lesser evil" and its support of capitalism and imperialism. (4) Its hostility to the Soviet Union. (5) Its rejection of united front offers from the Communist International. (6) Its responsibility for the triumph of fascism.

Non-Marxian Conception of the Road to Power. Communists maintained that the Socialist International had completely abandoned the essence of Marxism by its rejection of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the revolutionary technique of the road to power. As a corollary, the Socialist International also stressed class collaboration rather than the class struggle as the means of effecting a peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism. Communists alleged, thus in result defending capitalism against the attacks of revolutionary Marxists. The charge was further made that the "Marxism" of the Social Democrats had degenerated to social reformism, the

consequence of which was to make the parties of the Second International allies of the capitalist system.¹

"In the sphere of theory, Social Democracy has utterly and completely betrayed Marxism, having traversed the road from revisionism to complete liberal bourgeois reformism and avowed social-imperialism; it has substituted in place of the Marxian theory of the contradictions of capitalism, the bourgeois theory of its harmonious development; it has pigeonholed the theory of crises and of the pauperization of the proletariat; it has turned the flaming and redoubtable theory of class struggle into the mean advocacy of class peace; it has exchanged the theory of growing class antagonisms for the petty-bourgeois fairy-tale about the 'democratization' of capital; in place of the theory of the inevitability of war under capitalism it has substituted the bourgeois deceit of pacifism and the lying propaganda of 'ultra-imperialism'; it has exchanged the theory of the revolutionary downfall of capitalism for the counterfeit coinage of 'sound' capitalism transforming itself peacefully into socialism; it has replaced revolution by evolution, the destruction of the bourgeois state by its active upbuilding, the theory of proletarian dictatorship by the theory of coalition with the bourgeoisie, the doctrine of international proletarian solidarity -- by preaching defense of the imperialist fatherland; for Marxian dialectical materialism it has substituted the idealist philosophy and is now engaged in picking up the crumbs of religion that fall from the table of the bourgeoisie."²

"The Second International as represented by its most prominent leaders (Kautsky, Otto Bauer, Vandervelde, MacDonald) became the most vicious enemy of the October Revolution from the very outset. Advancing the slogan of 'pure' (i.e., never realizable) democracy, or 'democracy in general', as opposed to the Leninist slogan of the proletarian dictatorship, spreading deception concerning the 'above class character' of such democracy, the Second International completely departed from the Marxian doctrine of the class character of the state; . . ."³

Defense of Bourgeois Democracy.⁴ The Communist International's allegation, prior to 1935, that democracy invariably leads to fascism, has already been examined.⁵ Consequently, the Socialist International became the target for the many shafts of bitter criticism hurled at it by the Communist International because of its alleged defense of bourgeois democracy and participation in the ministries of capitalist governments, in the course of which the

¹Foster, From Bryan to Stalin, pp. 144-145.

²E.C.C.I., Program of the Communist International, pp. 70-71.

³E.C.C.I., Fifteen Years of the Communist International, pp. 6-7.

⁴Pieck, Freedom, Peace and Bread! pp. 46-51.

⁵Discussed supra.

militant activities of the working class were ruthlessly crushed by Socialist leaders.⁶

"The social-fascists defend capitalist democracy which is a blind for the cruel oppression of the masses, and they oppose the dictatorship of the proletariat which is real democracy for and by the masses."⁷

" . . . Moreover, Thomas covers up the class character of democracy by contrasting it with fascist dictatorship as if capitalist rule were not the essence of both. . . ."⁸

Support of Capitalism and Imperialism.¹ Because of its principles of class collaboration instead of class struggle, the accusation was made by Communist theoreticians that Social Democracy throughout the world had accelerated the restoration of post-war capitalism and imperialism rather than retarded its growth; in no sense had the Socialist International ever been a serious threat or menace to capitalism, imperialism and the status quo. The Communist International referred to the Second International as " . . . the agency of imperialism in the ranks of the working class. . . ."²

" . . . Social Democracy had provided the basis for the maintenance of capitalist rule and splitting the working class. . . ."³

" . . . Social Democracy because of its mass basis, was the main weapon of capitalism in the years immediately after the war for the rebuilding of capitalism. The advance of the workers to the struggle for power, the immediate onrush of which after the war was too powerful to be successfully defeated in direct battle, was circumvented by a strategical ruse -- the placing of Social Democratic governments, presidents and ministers in office thus appearing to surrender to the workers the seats of power, while the realities of power remained with capitalism. Only in this way, by the alliance with Social Democracy, by hiding capitalism under a Social Democratic front, was the capitalist state saved after the war. Social Democracy united with capitalism to defeat the workers' revolution. . . ."⁴

⁶E.C.C.I., Fifteen Years of the Communist International, pp. 6-7, 46-48. Browder, Meaning of Social-Fascism, p. 16. Dutt, Fascism and Social Revolution, pp. 152, 176-186.

⁷Communist Party, U.S.A., The Way Out -- A Program for American Labor, p. 17.

⁸Browder, op. cit., p. 16.

¹Foster, Toward Soviet America, pp. 185-193. E.C.C.I., Program of the Communist International, pp. 22-24.

²E.C.C.I., op. cit., p. 8.

³Dutt, op. cit., p. 171.

⁴Dutt, op. cit., pp. 48-49.

" . . . Bitter experience was to demonstrate that the Socialist International, instead of being the great menace to capitalism, was its mainstay and savior."⁵

"Social Democracy after the war was faced with two tasks: first to defeat the working-class revolution; second, to help to reconstruct the shattered structure of capitalism. . . ."⁶

"The Socialist parties of the world are the third parties of capitalism. They do not fight for even the most elementary demands of the workers. They are a part of the capitalist machinery for taking the bread out of the mouths of the workers and their families, the principal barrier to revolution. . . ."⁷

"The Socialist party all over the world is a main pillar of the capitalist system. Its function is to demoralize the workers' defense in the face of the capitalist offensive, to break up the workers' counter-offensive against the capitalist system. The Socialist party is a specialized section of the capitalist machinery for exploiting the toiling masses. . . ."⁸

Support of Imperialist War. Communists have also been bitter in their attacks upon the Second International for its alleged failure to take a firm stand against workers' participation in the World War (1914-1918). Instead of opposing it from the very beginning as the Bolshevik cadres under Lenin did, section after section of the Second International capitulated to its capitalist government and supported the latter's war demands.⁹

"In the sphere of foreign politics, the Social-Democratic Parties actively supported the imperialist war on the pretext of 'defending the fatherland'. Imperialist expansion and 'colonial policy' received their wholehearted support. . . ."¹⁰

Hostility to Soviet Union. Communists charged that the Second International was hostile towards the Soviet Union because socialism did not come there according to its (the Social Democracy's) conception of Marxism; in consequence Social Democrats worked hand in glove with capitalists and im-

⁵Foster, From Bryan to Stalin, p. 144.

⁶Dutt, op. cit., pp. 177-178.

⁷Foster, Toward Soviet America, p. 189.

⁸Ibid., pp. 240-241.

⁹Lenin, The War and the Second International, passim. E.C.C.I., Program of the Communist International, pp. 8, 69.

¹⁰E.C.C.I., op. cit., p. 69.

perialists for the Soviet Union's downfall.

"In the war plans of the capitalist nations against the Soviet Union the Social Democrats play a leading role. They scoff at the danger of capitalist war against the Soviet Union and thus disarm the workers' defense; they make the capitalist war appear as a fight against autocracy in the U.S.S.R. The Social Fascists hate the Soviet Union because they see in it the living refutation of their whole policy, a menacing threat to the capitalist system of which they are the most profound theoretical and practical defenders. . . . As a recent resolution of the Communist International says: 'The Social Democracy has turned itself into a shock-brigade of world imperialism which is preparing for war against the U.S.S.R.'"

"The special task of the Social Fascists is to discredit the Soviet Union among the workers. . . . They take up every capitalist anti-Soviet lie and assiduously propagate it among the workers. These they alternate with hypocritical pretensions of friendship, knowing that the masses are sympathetic to the U.S.S.R. . . ."

Paved Way for Fascism.¹² Perhaps the most serious allegation made of the Second International by the Communist parties is that the Social Democracy, judged objectively by the policies it pursued, paved the way for the rise of fascism in Italy, Germany and elsewhere.

Although, as Stalin pointed out, organic unity of both Internationals was out of the question,¹³ united front movements for combatting fascism and war were possible, but such negotiations were rejected by the Second International.¹⁴

"Social Democracy rejected the united working-class front because it was pursuing an alternative line, which it declared to be the correct line for defeating Fascism -- the line of unity with the bourgeoisie and support of the bourgeois State, even under conditions of dictatorship. This 'was the so-called line of the 'lesser evil'. . . ."

R.P. Dutt, theoretician of the Communist Party of Great Britain, has maintained that the Social Democracy helped usher in fascism in five distinct ways: its "corruption" of Marxism; its devotion to the national fatherland in each country; its fight against the dictatorship of the proletariat as the

¹¹ Foster, Toward Soviet America, pp. 186-187. Also see Browder, Communism in the United States, p. 100.

¹² Dutt, op. cit., pp. 143-152, 169-196. Pieck, We Are Fighting for a Soviet Germany, pp. 64-70.

¹³ Stalin, Leninism, Vol. I, p. 406.

¹⁴ Pieck, Freedom, Peace and Bread! p. 80. Dutt, op. cit., pp. 140-143. Manuilsky, Revolutionary Crisis, Fascism and War, p. 8.

¹⁵ Dutt, op. cit., pp. 141-142.

road to socialism; its confusion of social reform with social revolution; finally, its disastrous policies of class collaboration as a substitute for class struggle.¹⁶

" . . . The establishment of the fascist dictatorship was only possible for the bourgeoisie in consequence of the sabotage of the class struggle pursued by Social-Democracy, its disorganization and disarming of the proletariat and its ever more pronounced fusion with the capitalist state apparatus. Only owing to the fact that the Communist Party of Germany, as the revolutionary vanguard, was robbed of the support of the majority of the working class by the Social-Democratic policy of splitting, could finance capital erect its terroristic dictatorship over the proletariat."¹⁷

"The path of bourgeois 'democracy', of Kautsky, of the Second International, has led to the victory of Fascism."¹⁸

"Fascism can, however, as the Italian example had already shown, only reach a mass basis after Social Democracy has fully exposed itself and created widespread mass disillusionment in the midst of growing economic crisis and gathering revolutionary issues. This is the general background for the growth of Fascism. . . ."¹⁹

Criticism of the Socialist Party -- Prior to 1935

The Communist party's indictment of the Socialist party in the United States followed the general line of attack already indicated in the Comintern's thesis on the Second Socialist International. The Communist party thus attacked the alleged support of capitalism and the class-collaboration policies of the S.P.;¹ its hostility to the Soviet Union;² its indecisive war position;³

¹⁶ Dutt, op. cit., p. 182.

¹⁷ Pieck, We Are Fighting for a Soviet Germany, p. 54.

¹⁸ Dutt, op. cit., p. 152.

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 136-137.

¹ Foster, Crisis in the Socialist Party, pp. 20-22; Toward Soviet America, pp. 239-241. Olgin, The Socialist Party--Last Bulwark of Capitalism, pp. 12-19, 22-23, 28. E.O.C.I., Program of the Communist International, p. 69. Daily Worker, March 9, 1935, p. 5.

² Foster, Crisis in the Socialist Party, pp. 18-20. Olgin, op. cit., pp. 23-26.

³ Foster, op. cit., pp. 17-18. Olgin, op. cit., pp. 20-21.

its aid to the forces of fascism.⁴ In addition to these general criticisms, there were more specific ones related to the particular economic and political issues existing in the United States.

The Communist party pointed to the great decline in membership of the Socialist party from about 118,000 to some 19,000 in 1935 as an indication that something was basically wrong with the S.P.⁵ It listed the S.P.'s defects as follows: (1) Its petty-bourgeois, non-proletarian leadership. (2) Its traditional factionalism and absence of party discipline. (3) Its failure to educate party members in basic principles of Marxism. (4) Its underestimation of the role of "immediate demands" in building a militant working class movement. (5) Its mistaken trade union policies. (6) Its support of capitalism by class-collaboration policies. (7) Its support of the New Deal. (8) Its antagonism to the Soviet Union. (9) Its rejection of united front offers from the Communist party.

Petty-Bourgeois Leadership.¹ The Communist party has alleged that the leadership of the Socialist party has always been completely dominated by middle-class intellectuals -- doctors, lawyers, ministers, teachers, etc. -- who have given the party its middle-class philosophy, strategy and tactics, which have been totally at variance with revolutionary Marxism and militant class struggle tactics; in consequence, the party has always been one of reformism, not revolution. Its National Executive Committee, composed of eleven members, has always been pre-dominantly of non-working class extraction in its make-up. Few, if any, members have been representative of the proletarians, Negroes, women, or youth of the party.²

⁴O.P., U.S.A., The Way Out--A Program for American Labor, p. 42. Browder, The Meaning of Social Fascism, pp. 40-41; Communism in the United States, p. 115. Foster, Toward Soviet America, pp. 191-193.

⁵Foster, From Bryan to Stalin, pp. 283, 288.

¹Clgin, Why Communism? p. 29. Foster, From Bryan to Stalin, pp. 29, 285-286; The Crisis in the Socialist Party, pp. 42-43.

²Foster, The Crisis in the Socialist Party, p. 43.

" . . . These non-proletarian elements have always conceived the Party pretty much as a tail to the petty bourgeois kite. They wanted to make of it a liberal or progressive party. Vote-catching and petty political reforms have been their whole line of action. They looked on the Party as a reformist propaganda organization. Consequently they played down every manifestation of working-class fight spirit. . . . And all the way along, throughout the whole history of the Socialist Party, these middle class intellectuals suppressed the teachings of Marxism to the Party membership and utilized all their power to check, repress and often drive out of the Party in masses, the very elements without whom the Party could not possibly be built, the left wing of the Party.

"The general result of this opportunist policy was that the Socialist Party failed to become a strong revolutionary Party. It ducked and evaded and compromised every struggle and issue that the workers were basically interested in. . . ."³

Factionalism and Absence of Party Discipline. The Communist party has alleged that the Socialist party has likewise been the stalking ground for many heterogeneous anti-capitalist elements: some vaguely Socialistic in their outlook; some of revisionist Marxian tendency; others representative of the trade union bureaucracy; still others remnants of the agrarian-populist movement; and finally a militant left-wing group advocating revolutionary Marxian socialism.⁴ The C.P. has further contended that these right-wing and left-wing elements have always been at variance with each other, right against left, and right-wing forces against each other. Consequently, the party has always been weak and torn apart by internal dissensions which have prevented strongly united action, and have given it a tradition of lax discipline; members act on their own initiative without regard to party decisions and rulings. As a result of this lack of homogeneity, the Socialist party's history has been rife with splits.⁵

In the 1933 convention of the Socialist party, there were no less than six factions at war with each other, a Communist party observer has alleged;⁶

³Foster, From Bryan to Stalin, pp. 285-286.

⁴Foster, The Crisis in the Socialist Party, pp. 27-30.

⁵Foster, op. cit., pp. 32-37.

⁶Paul Novick, "Decay of the Socialist Party," New Masses (July 10, 1934), Vol. XII, No. 2, pp. 8-12.

under such circumstances, the S.P. could not possibly lead the American workers to victory.

Failure to Educate Party Membership.¹ Communists have maintained that, unlike the C.P., the S.P. has never very successfully engaged in the important task of educating its cadres in the fundamentals of Marxism, and therefore has never had an educated and militant vanguard as a nucleus on which to build a substantial party.

"It was obviously an indispensable first condition for the success of the Socialist Party that it systematically educate the broadest possible ranks of Marxian revolutionists. Such revolutionists furnish the necessary understanding of the capitalist system, they are the tireless organizers of the masses, the bravest fighters in every crisis, the indefatigable builders of the Party, the heart and brain of the class struggle. To try to build a revolutionary Socialist Party without developing the Marxian understanding of its membership is to attempt the classically impossible task of making bricks without straw."²

Underestimation of Immediate Demands. The C.P.'s estimate of the role of immediate demands in winning converts to Marxism has already been given.³ It has maintained that the Socialist party has been passive and has failed to make capital of the perennial difficulties of the working class and use them as issues for building a working class movement. Communists have maintained that they alone have given leadership to workers in parades, demonstrations, strikes, and on picket lines; they have denied that the Socialist party has ever been effective in such class struggles.⁴ Even when the economic crash of 1929 threatened the working class with unemployment, starvation, and death, the Socialist party failed to rise to the occasion and come forward as leaders with an adequate program, Communists have declared.⁵

¹Foster, The Crisis in the Socialist Party, pp. 6-7, 26.

²Ibid., p. 26.

³Discussed supra.

⁴Foster, The Crisis in the Socialist Party, pp. 6-7, 25, 45-46; From Bryan to Stalin, p. 284.

⁵Foster, The Crisis in the Socialist Party, pp. 23-25.

Opportunist Trade Unionism.¹ Unlike the Communist party, which has formulated a definite position on all important trade union questions, for the adoption of which its members have agitated in the unions, the Socialist party took the attitude of trade union neutrality, i.e., that it must make no efforts to control the trade unions for the advancement of its own view on socialism. This was a mistaken attitude, the C.P. held. It was the duty of militant socialists not merely to repudiate neutrality but to engage actively in the fight against the opportunism of the A.F.L. bureaucracy headed first by Gompers and subsequently by Green. Not only did the Socialist party (in spite of the protest of its Left Wing) not remain neutral, but it gave aid and support to the Gompers bureaucracy, in opposition to the interests of the rank-and-file workers in the A.F.L., Communists charged.

"In fact, the S.P. leaders' real tendency was to collaborate and amalgamate with the Gompers regime. If they did not actually consolidate their forces with the Green ruling bureaucracy sooner, it was primarily because of the pressure of the large and militant Left wing of the Party. . .

"This traditional policy of the Socialist Party leadership to temporize and compromise with the reactionary American Federation of Labor officialdom was disastrous to the development of the Socialist Party as the real leading force in the labor movement. The only way the Socialist Party could have come forward as the vanguard of the working class was by a policy of sustained militant struggle on all fronts against the Gompers regime, and in this it failed dismally."²

Support of New Deal.³ The Communist party has charged that instead of attacking the New Deal in the days of its early inception as the C.P. did, the Socialist party and its bureaucracy joined hands with the A.F.L. in giving enthusiastic aid and support to the policies of Roosevelt.

"The Socialist Party also tailed along after Roosevelt. The Socialist leaders greeted the New Deal enthusiastically. In some respects they went even beyond the Green bureaucrats, as they called the New Deal a big step

¹ Ibid., pp. 15-16.

² Idem.

³ Browder, Communism in the United States, pp. 57-58, 115, 130-131. Foster, From Bryan to Stalin, p. 249.

towards Socialism. Hillquit and Thomas journeyed to Washington to pay their respects to Roosevelt. No A.F. of L. officials entered more fully into the machinery of the New Deal than the Socialist needle trade union leaders, Hillman, Dubinsky, Zaritsky, etc. They all counseled confidence in Roosevelt, and Norman Thomas warned the workers that this was not the time to strike."⁴

" . . . The A.F. of L. leaders and many Socialist Party leaders set as their guiding rule to do everything to avoid revolution, to save capitalism; that is why they join Roosevelt in putting across the New Deal and the N.R.A.; that's why they say 'now is not the time to strike'; that's why if the workers strike in spite of them, they try to break the strike and send the workers back without gaining their demands, to tie up the workers' organizations in arbitration courts, etc. . . ."⁵

Failure to Respond to United Front Offers. The Communist party also charged that it consistently but in vain made overtures to the Socialist party for united front agreements⁶ on specific issues on which common agreement existed, the chief of these being the following: opposition to Roosevelt's "hunger and war program"; federal unemployment insurance; release of political prisoners; opposition to war and fascism in Germany, China, United States; recognition of the Soviet Union by the United States.⁷ These offers were not accepted by the N.E.C. of the S.P.⁸

Criticism of the Second Socialist International -- Since 1935

Since the new orientation adopted at the Seventh World Congress of the Comintern, the chief criticism made of the Second International has been its continued rejection of the Comintern's offers both of a united front¹

⁴Foster, op. cit., p. 249.

⁵Browder, op. cit., p. 57.

⁶Bittelman, The Advance of the United Front, pp. 32-68.

⁷Ibid., pp. 5-6.

⁸Ibid., pp. 50-53.

¹Browder, New Steps in the United Front, p. 11. E.C.C.I., The Menace of a New World War, pp. 4,7.

and of organic unity² with the Communist International. The Communist International has regarded rejection of both pleas as deplorable since the growth of the People's Front movement, chiefly at the behest of the Comintern, has in fact brought Communists and Socialists together in numerous European countries.³

In urging organic unity of both Internationals, Communists have declared it unnecessary to insist upon the twenty-one conditions originally laid down by the Comintern.⁴ Instead, the five conditions set forth by Dimitroff at the Seventh World Congress were held sufficient. These five conditions were the following: that the Social-Democracy sever its ties with the bourgeoisie; that unity of action be achieved; that the revolutionary road to power and the dictatorship of the proletariat be accepted; that support of the capitalist class in an imperialist war be refused; that the new organization be based on the Bolshevik principle of democratic centralism.⁵

"Now, as a result of many years of struggle for the Bolshevization of our Parties, having achieved the iron unity of our ranks -- which in many countries have received their baptism of fire in big class battles and have passed the test of underground work -- we are able, in the present concrete situation, to present the question of creating a united revolutionary party of the proletariat in a new way."⁶

"We are often asked why we are now laying down five conditions for unity instead of twenty-one as we did at the Second Congress of the Communist International. We are doing that because the five conditions of the Seventh Congress essentially cover the twenty-one conditions of the Second Congress, . . . because our five conditions wholly correspond to the thoughts and sentiments of these workers."⁷

²Manuilsky, The Work of the Seventh Congress, pp. 39-44.

³Pieck, Freedom, Peace and Bread! pp. 53-55, 58.

⁴Manuilsky, op. cit., pp. 42-43.

⁵Dimitroff, Working Class Unity--Bulwark Against Fascism, pp. 64-66.
Manuilsky, op. cit., pp. 41-42.

⁶Manuilsky, op. cit., p. 40.

⁷Ibid., pp. 42-43.

Criticism of the Socialist Party -- Since 1935

Admission of Trotskyists. The outstanding criticism the Communist party has made of the Socialist party since the Seventh World Congress of the Comintern has been the alleged left-sectarianism into which it is declared to have fallen. Communists have attributed this to the influence of "counter-revolutionary Trotskyism" resulting from the admission of the Trotskyists into the Socialist party in 1936. Although the Trotskyists were subsequently expelled from the S.P., their influence has remained, the Communists have maintained; this has given the party its ultra-leftist tinge and has caused a tremendous decline in its membership and influence.

"The sectarian danger in the Socialist Party was greatly increased by that Party's recent absorption of the Trotskyite group. Just at the same time when these counter-revolutionary elements were being proved to be terrorists and assassins the Socialist Party saw fit to take them to its bosom. But it will inevitably pay dearly for this mistake in loss of strength and influence. . . ."¹

" . . . The admission of the counter-revolutionary Trotskyites was an injection of deadly poison into the life tissues of the Socialist Party"²

"We must warn our Socialist comrades: Be careful, you are about to swallow a deadly poison, which we know from sad experience. Better prepare an emetic, for surely you will soon be in convulsions from severe internal political disturbances. We hope you will recover from the illness which you are guaranteeing for yourselves."³

Ultra-Leftist Sectarianism. The following are the specific allegations of ultra-leftist sectarianism and counter-revolutionary Trotskyism which the Communist party has made against the Socialist party: (1) Its opposition to the People's Front. (2) Its opposition to collective security. (3) Its crit-

¹Foster, The Crisis in the Socialist Party, p. 45.

²Ibid., p. 69.

³Browder, Report to the Ninth Convention of the Communist Party, p. 16; The People's Front, p. 27.

ical attitude towards the Soviet Union and its denunciation of the Moscow trials. (4) Its hostility to a Farmer-Labor party. (5) Its rejection of offers of united front and organic unity.

Opposition to the People's Front.⁴ The Communist party's case for the People's Front has already been stated.⁵ The arguments raised by Norman Thomas and the Socialist party against it have been called "super-revolutionary".⁶ Communists have maintained that the paramount problem of stopping fascism can only be solved by a People's Front program with "democracy against fascism" as its slogan.⁷ They have maintained that it is inexpedient to raise the issue of "socialism versus capitalism" at this time, as Norman Thomas and the Socialists have insisted upon doing.⁸

"The worst aspect of the doubts and confusion of Thomas is that he has never himself, in his own programmatic pronouncements, faced the problem of 'transition' to socialism. The People's Front program is not socialism. It has the great merit of making no pretensions to that effect. It is openly and frankly a joint platform of non-Socialists together with Socialists. But the realization of this program creates the most favorable conditions for gathering and organizing the forces of socialism. No one can seriously pretend to fight for socialism, without fighting stubbornly by all means to create those most favorable conditions. But Thomas wants the 'transition' before he will help create the conditions for it. . . ."⁹

Communists have also charged that because of the S.P.'s insistence upon "socialism versus capitalism" in the 1936 presidential election campaign, it gave aid and comfort to the forces of Hearst, Landon and the Liberty League by concentrating its attacks upon Roosevelt instead of Landon and the Repub-

⁴Browder, The Communists in the People's Front, pp. 41-53.

⁵Discussed supra.

⁶Browder, op. cit., p. 41.

⁷Foster, The Crisis in the Socialist Party, p. 47.

⁸Idem.

⁹Browder, op. cit., p. 44.

lican party.¹⁰

"It is clear that the Republican candidate Landon, with his false face of liberalism and his tutelage by the fascist Hearst, is the spokesman of the main fascist danger in this country. . . .

"But Thomas can see no fascist danger in Landon. Quite the reverse: he concentrates his main fire against Roosevelt and gives direct support to Hearst's man, Landon. . . .

"Thomas aids the capitalist demagogy by absolving Landon of any taint of fascism and accepting this pseudo-liberalism at its face value. . . ."¹¹

Opposition to Collective Security. The C.P. contention that the preservation of peace can be achieved through collective security pacts with the great "democracies" of the world has already been indicated.¹ It has also declared that opposition to collective security leads to "neutrality" and "isolation", which are policies favored by American imperialists, and lead to war.²

"The American imperialist policy of 'isolation which Thomas accepts with a flourish of much radical phraseology, cannot prevent war nor keep the United States out of war if and when it comes. 'The way to keep America out of war is to keep war out of the world', correctly says the Communist Party. And this can only be done by an organized struggle for peace on the part of the anti-war forces of the world against the mad-dog fascist war-makers. The great present task of the revolutionary movement is to mobilize the workers and their allies for this struggle against war, and it is a task that the Communist Parties are everywhere loyally fulfilling. But the Socialist Party, with its 'stay out of it' American capitalist neutrality theories, has abdicated mass leadership in this struggle for peace and is objectively lending support to the fascist war-makers in Europe and this country."³

Hostility to the Soviet Union. The Communist party has been severe in its criticism of the Socialist party's alleged unfriendliness towards the Soviet Union and its support of the adjudicated murderers and terrorists involved in the Moscow Trials (1936-1938).⁴ Commenting on this, Foster has

¹⁰ Foster, op. cit., pp. 47-50. Browder, The People's Front, pp. 28-33.

¹¹ Foster, op. cit., p. 48.

¹ Discussed supra.

² Bittelman, Going Left, p. 33. Foster, op. cit., pp. 50-52.

³ Foster, op. cit., pp. 52-53.

⁴ Browder, Traitors in American History, pp. 17-20. Foster, op. cit., pp. 63-65.

declared:

"The revolutionary stature of a party can be measured by its attitude towards the U.S.S.R. This is because the Soviet government is the revolution in life, the crystallization in flesh and blood of revolutionary theory and practice. The anti-Soviet tendencies in the leadership of the Socialist Party are expressions of the reformism with which the Party is afflicted. . . .

"It is high time that the Socialist Party put an end to these anti-revolutionary trends. . . ."⁵

Critical Attitude towards Farmer-Labor Party.⁶ Communists have accused the Socialist party of failing to recognize the importance of the Farmer-Labor party as the great bulwark against the growth of fascism in the United States. They have further held that by insisting upon too radical a program as a condition precedent for supporting such a movement, the Socialist party in effect has hindered its growth.

"It is true that the Socialist Party does lip service to the question of the Farmer-Labor Party, but that is about as far as it goes. In practice, the Socialist Party follows a line inimical to the Farmer-Labor Party. This manifests itself by the Socialist Party's systematic opposition to all steps leading towards the actual formation of the Farmer-Labor Party. It hinders the Farmer-Labor Party by insisting upon an unduly radical program for it and by putting forth pessimistic arguments that there is as yet no mass basis for such a party. Besides, the Socialist Party takes little or no active part in the now necessary preliminary agitation and organization steps -- the building of local and state parties, Farmer-Labor Party conferences, etc. -- and often actually resist these movements. . . .

" . . . The baneful and growing influence of the Trotskyites in the Socialist Party greatly increases this anti-Farmer-Labor Party trend. Thus the Socialist Party raises a high barrier of sectarianism that blocks its way to mass influence and leadership on the fundamentally important issue of the Farmer-Labor Party."⁷

Rejection of United Front and Organic Unity.⁸ The Communist party has scored the refusal of the Socialist party to enter into united front agreements or negotiate for organic unity, despite the united front agreements which have been consummated from time to time by local sections of the Commu-

⁵Foster, op. cit., p. 65.

⁶Bittelman, op. cit., pp. 39-44. Foster, op. cit., pp. 53-56.

⁷Foster, op. cit., p. 54.

⁸Bittelman, op. cit., pp. 44-46. Foster, From Bryan to Stalin, p. 312; The Crisis in the Socialist Party, pp. 60-63.

nist and Socialist parties. Communists especially regretted the refusal of the S.P. to accept a joint presidential slate in 1936.⁹ They have attributed the anti-unity line to the influence of the Trotskyists and the hang-over from the days the Old Guard Socialists dominated the party.¹⁰

General Summary

Foster has summarized some of the major shortcomings of the Socialist party in these words:

"The general result of the Socialist Party's traditional flabby, reformist, class-collaborationist policies, dictated by its opportunist middle class leadership, has been that the Socialist Party could not and did not become a strong, mass revolutionary Party. Its leaders ducked and evaded and compromised every struggle and issue that the workers were basically interested in. By its weak, opportunist course, the Socialist Party was unable to defeat its powerful capitalist enemies and their labor leader henchmen. Hence it did not secure the leadership of the masses and become their accepted revolutionary party. There could be no other outcome of the Socialist Party's long record of opportunist vacillations and abdication of leadership in the class struggle than the Party's present crisis and obvious failure."¹

⁹ Foster, The Crisis in the Socialist Party, p. 61.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 63.

¹ Ibid., p. 25.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE COMMUNIST PARTY -- CRITICISM OF THE LOVESTONE GROUP

Historical Backgrounds

Jay Lovestone, Secretary of the Communist Party, was expelled from the party in 1929. According to the official version of the Communist party, his refusal to submit to the decisions of the Communist International and accept its discipline¹ led the Comintern to order his expulsion,² which order was carried out by the C.P., U.S.A.

According to the Communist party, the ousting of Lovestone was part of a world-wide purge to cleanse the Communist International of its rightist elements.³ Those accused of Right Deviationism included Brandler and Thalheimer in Germany,⁴ Jilek in Czechoslovakia,⁵ Kilbom in Sweden,⁶ Sellier and Doriot in France,⁷ and Lovestone and Bertram Wolfe in the United States.⁸ The roots of the controversy were to be found in the conflict between Stalin and Bukharin in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union,⁹ and subsequently in the Communist International itself.¹⁰

¹Stalin, Speeches on the American Communist Party, pp. 25,37.

²Bittelman, Milestones in the History of the Communist Party, pp. 88-89.

³Carl Reeve, "Lovestoneism--Twin of Fascist-Trotskyism," The Communist (August, 1938), Vol. XVII, No. 8, p. 733.

⁴Reeve, op. cit., p. 733. E.C.C.I., Fifteen Years of the Communist International, p. 24.

⁵Reeve, op. cit., p. 733.

⁶Idem.

⁷Idem.

⁸Idem. Browder, Communism in the United States, pp. 309-310.

⁹Popov, Outline History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Vol. II, pp. 352-358, 366, 376-381. Stalin, Leninism, Vol. II, pp.139-150, 184-240.

¹⁰Popov, op. cit., Vol. II, pp.358-361, 365-369. Stalin, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 141-145-190-193.

A detailed analysis of these problems is scarcely in order. In the main, the followers of Bukharin were accused, in the C.P.S.U., of underestimating the dangers of the restoration of capitalism in the U.S.S.R., by: demanding a retardation of industrialization; making concessions to the kulaks; minimizing farm collectivization; favoring the abandonment of the government monopoly on foreign trade.¹¹

After bitterly attacking the program of the Bukharinites in the Soviet Union, Stalin tersely declared:

" . . . There cannot be the slightest doubt that the triumph of the Right deviation in our Party would release the forces of capitalism, would undermine the revolutionary position of the proletariat, and increase the chances for the restoration of capitalism in our country."¹²

In the Communist International, Stalin charged that the Right deviation represented a tendency ". . . to depart from the revolutionary line of Marxism in the direction of Social Democracy."¹³ More specifically, Bukharin was indicted on four counts: his analysis of capitalism from which he concluded that capitalism was maintaining itself and not likely to become unstabilized or face a crisis; his failure to advocate a war to the finish against the 'Left' wing of the Social Democracy; his failure to fight the conciliation tendencies of the Right deviationists; his failure to advocate iron discipline within the party.¹⁴

Evaluation of Lovestone. It was these doctrines which Lovestone was charged with endorsing and fighting for, on the basis of which he was called Bukharin's "personal representative" in the United States.¹ Prior and subsequent to his expulsion in 1929, the Communist party launched bitter and

¹¹Stalin, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 141, 145.

¹²Ibid., p. 145.

¹³Ibid., p. 141.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 190-193.

¹Reeve, op.cit., p. 732.

excoriating attacks upon him. He was accused of fomenting factionalism in the party² and engaging in intrigues for purposes of personal gain;³ his capacities as a leader were also seriously questioned;⁴ his allegation that 99% of the party stood firmly behind him prior to his expulsion was denied.⁵

"A few words regarding the vaunting manner in which the group of Comrade Lovestone speaks and represents itself here in the name of the whole Party, in the name of 99 percent of the Communist Party of America. . . . You had a majority because the American Communist Party until now regarded you as the determined supporters of the Communist International. And it was only because the Party regarded you as the friends of the Comintern that you had a majority in the ranks of the American Communist Party. But what will happen if the American workers learn that you intend to break the unity of the ranks of the Comintern and you are thinking of conducting a fight against its executive bodies -- that is the question, dear comrades? Do you think that the American workers will follow your lead against the Comintern, that they will prefer the interests of your factional group to the interests of the Comintern? . . ."⁶

"Comrade Lovestone is spoken of as a talented leader, as the founder of the American Communist Party. It is said that the Communist Party of America cannot get along without Comrade Lovestone, that the removal of Comrade Lovestone may ruin the Party. That is not true, comrades. More than that, it is not sincere. It would be a bad Party that could not get along without any given leader. . . . And, what is more, comrade Lovestone after all is not such a great leader. He is, of course, a capable and talented comrade. But how have his capabilities been employed? In factional scandal-mongering, in factional intrigue. Comrade Lovestone is indisputably an adroit and talented factional wirepuller. No one can deny him that. But factional leadership must not be confused with Party leadership. A Party leader is one thing, a factional leader is something quite different. Not every factional leader has the gift of being a Party leader. I doubt very much that at this stage Comrade Lovestone can be a Party leader."⁷

The Communist party's criticism of the Lovestone group has paralleled its own development and changing conditions. It falls into two categories: prior to the Seventh World Congress; since 1935.

² Stalin, Speeches on the American Communist Party, pp. 13-18.

³ Ibid., pp. 31-32.

⁴ Idem.

⁵ Ibid., pp. 8, 31.

⁶ Stalin, Speeches on the American Communist Party, pp. 30-31.

⁷ Ibid., pp. 31-32.

Criticism of the Lovestone Group -- Prior to 1935

Left Social Fascism. Lovestone and his followers were called "left social-fascists".¹

" . . . They serve to give the whole tendency a more 'red' tinge with their pretense at Communism, . . . The 'left' Social Fascists are in reality specialized troops of the reactionary bureaucrats for struggle against revolutionary sections of the working class."²

There were two leading objections raised to the Lovestone Group by the Communist party: (1) Its thesis on American capitalism. (3) Its theory of exceptionalism.

Thesis on American Capitalism. Lovestone was especially taken to task for accepting Bukharin's analysis of the nature of American capitalism, which in essence held that American capitalism was firmly entrenched, and was likely to remain so, with no crisis in sight.³

"For some time previous to his expulsion, Lovestone had been propagating in the United States Bukharin's theory of 'organized capitalism', glorifying American imperialism and declaring that it was impregnable. On the very eve of the 1929 crash, Lovestone declared that American imperialism was going stronger. Corrected by the Communist International and by the whole American Party, Lovestone organized a small group to fight against the Party and the Communist International and to carry on disruptive work.

"The Marxist-Leninist laws of the contradictions of capitalism, especially the general crisis of world capitalism, did not apply to the United States, according to Lovestone. . . ."⁴

Theory of Exceptionalism.⁵ The Communist party dismissed lightly the claims of "American exceptionalism" raised by Lovestone. It contended that there could be no doubt that certain aspects of American capitalism differed from those elsewhere, but in the last analysis, the basis of the Communist

¹Foster, Toward Soviet America, p. 196. Bittelman, Milestones in the History of the Communist Party, p. 72.

²Foster, op. cit., p. 197.

³Ibid., pp. 733-734. Foster, op. cit., p. 150.

⁴Reeve, op. cit., p. 733.

⁵Bittelman, op. cit., pp. 72-73. Stalin, op. cit., pp. 6, 11.

movement had to be its general characteristics, and not its exceptional traits in different countries.

" . . . It would be wrong to ignore the specific peculiarities of American capitalism. The Communist Party, in its work must take them into account. But it would be still more wrong to base the activities of the Communist Party on these specific features, since the foundation of the activities of every Communist Party, including the American Communist Party, on which it must base itself, must be the general features of capitalism, which are the same for all countries, and not its specific features in any given country. It is on this that the internationalism of the Communist Party is founded. Specific features are only supplementary to the general features. . . ."⁶

Commenting on national peculiarities (Lovestone's "exceptionalism"), a Communist theoretician declared:

" . . . These claims and assertions would be laughable if they were not the direct reflection of bourgeois nationalism and imperialist chauvinism with which monopoly capital is now trying to fascize its rule and prepare for war. Muste's 'Americanism' and Lovestone's 'exceptionalism', therefore, assume especial value for the New Dealers, the value of the most 'advanced' detachments of the imperialist and chauvinist bourgeoisie operating among the more conscious workers."⁷

Criticism of the Lovestone Group -- Since 1935¹

Identified with Trotskyism. The Communist party's criticism of the Lovestoneites has become increasingly sharper since the Seventh World Congress. Although Lovestone is said to have hailed this new approach,² subsequent developments have shown that his group has moved further away from, rather than close to, the Communist party. Another factor which has increased the C.P.'s antagonism toward Lovestone and his followers has been the latter's attitude toward the Moscow Trials. After accepting the early trials as genuine, or historically justified, the Lovestoneites later denounced

⁶Stalin, op. cit., p. 11.

⁷Bittelman, op. cit., pp. 72-73.

¹Milton Howard, "Toward What is Lovestoneism Heading?" Daily Worker, March 23, 1937, p. 2 (Part I); March 24, 1937 p. 2 (Part II). Reeve, op. cit., pp. 732-742.

²Howard, op. cit., Part I

the Bukharin-Rykov trial as political murder.³

The Communist party has declared that Lovestoneism and Trotskyism are fascist twins, despite the former's efforts, regarded merely as pretense by the C.P., to dissociate itself from Trotskyism.

"The role of the Lovestoneite group as agents of fascism becomes clear in the light of the recent trials at Moscow of the twenty-one Trotskyite-Bukharinite wreckers and spies. Lovestoneism can no longer masquerade as 'a political trend in the working class movement'. Lovestoneism now finds it impossible any longer to maintain the fiction that it is 'more respectable' than Trotskyism. The Lovestoneite group of renegades and disrupters is now identified with the Trotskyites, with identical reactionary aims and organizational cooperation."⁴

The Communist party has made these specific charges to justify its allegations of "Trotskyism" against the Lovestone group: (1) Its aid to fascism by its policies relating to the Soviet Union, China and Spain. (2) Its opposition to collective security. (3) Its opposition to the People's Front. (4) Its "disruptive tactics" in trade unions.

The Moscow Trials. Even prior to the trials of Bukharin, Rykov and Tomsky, the Communist party condemned the attitude taken by the Lovestoneites, which the C.P. construed as holding the earlier trials to be "historically justifiable" frameups.⁵

"The perilous coasting toward Trotskyite positions, despite its avowed hostility to Trotskyism, is also seen in the Lovestone position on the Moscow Trials. Lovestoneism has created a remarkable 'analysis' of these trials. . . ."⁶

"Is Lovestoneism preparing itself for the coming trials of its god-fathers, the Right Opportunists, Bukharin and Rykov? Is its straddling position on the recent trials affected by the exposure of the links between Trotskyism and the Right Opposition in the U.S.S.R.?"⁷

Because they defended Bukharin, Rykov, Tomsky and company against the

³Discussed infra.

⁴Raeve, op. cit., p. 732.

⁵Howard, op. cit., Part II.

⁶Idem.

⁷Idem.

charges of counter-revolution, attempted assassination, sabotage and agreements with the agents of Hitler and the Mikado, the C.P. accused the Lovestoneites of taking a position identical with the Trotskyists.⁸ Communists further averred that as far back as 1934, the Bukharinites had made common cause with the followers of Trotsky for the overthrow of the Soviet regime and the restoration of capitalism in the U.S.S.R.⁹

"We now know that this bloc of Bukharinites and Trotskyites was at that time employed by the secret services of the fascists for wrecking, murder and the dismemberment of the Soviet Union."¹⁰

Spain. The Lovestoneites were accused of working hand in glove with the Trotskyists everywhere for the purpose of giving aid and comfort to the fascists.

" . . . The Lovestoneites and Trotskyites are carrying out the policies and desires of the general staff of the Japanese armies and of Hitler and Mussolini. . . ."¹¹

On the Spanish question, serious charges were preferred against the Lovestoneites. The Spanish Workers Party of Marxist Unity (P.O.U.M.), whose policies the followers of Lovestone endorsed, was called the counter-revolutionary agent of Franco, fighting against the Loyalists from within.¹² All the Loyalist forces in Spain were said to have opposed the policies of the P.O.U.M. except the Lovestoneites and the Trotskyists, who were alleged to have rallied to its support.¹³

"In Spain, it has been proved by documents, Andreas Nin and the other Trotskyites and Lovestoneites of the P.O.U.M. were paid agents of Franco

⁸Reeve, op. cit., p. 732.

⁹Idem.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 733.

¹¹Reeve, op. cit., p. 736.

¹²Howard, op. cit., Parts I and II. Reeve, op. cit., pp. 737-739. Soria, Trotskyism in the Service of Franco--A Documented Record of Treachery by the P.O.U.M. in Spain, passim.

¹³Howard, op. cit., Parts I and II. Reeve, op. cit., pp. 737-739.

and were part of his fascist spying and wrecking apparatus. The counter-revolutionary insurrection at Barcelona last year led by the Trotskyite-Lovestoneite P.O.U.M. and other criminal and reactionary elements in behalf of Franco is well known. How completely Lovestone identifies himself with these fascist spies and agents in Spain is seen by his repeated plea for them in his sheet, The Workers' Age. . . .¹⁴

"The POUM has become the notorious 'Fifth Column' of the fascist army, the column of the invaders within the gates of Madrid. Emitting a large cloud of violently pseudo-revolutionary phrases, a hash of slogans for 'socialization' and 'dual power', the POUM has become a force of treachery and demoralization."¹⁵

Collective Security. The Communist party has declared that in place of collective security as the road to peace, the Lovestoneites have taken an isolationist position, as evidenced by their endorsement of the Oxford Pledge in the American Student Union; their demand for the withdrawal of Standard Oil tankers and other American ships from Chinese waters; their support of an "anti-War" Congress (Keep America Out of War Committee) which is a rival to the League for Peace and Democracy. The Communists further charged that at a meeting of the said "anti-war" Congress, the Lovestoneites betrayed Spain.

"The Lovestoneites together with other isolationists dominated this conference, and although the rank-and-file delegates, who through confusion attended the congress, wanted to pass a resolution calling for lifting of the embargo on Spain, and for the boycott of Japanese goods, the Lovestoneites, led by such people as Bertram Wolfe and their whole group of national leaders of disruption, successfully sabotaged the passage of such a resolution. . . ."¹

Opposition to People's Front. The Communists have declared that in the name of revolution, the Lovestoneites have opposed the People's Front, the only salvation of the working class, in Spain, France, China and in the United States; that they have even urged their followers to preach "revolutionary defeatism" in democratic countries allied to the Soviet Union in a

¹⁴Reeve, op. cit., p. 737.

¹⁵Howard, op. cit., Part I.

¹Reeve, op. cit., p. 737.

war against the fascist powers.² It has also been charged that they have been unwilling to work for the election of anti-fascist candidates pledged to support a progressive, although not an out-and-out socialist, program.³ They have likewise been accused of refusing to support "the progressive Roosevelt administration".⁴

Disruptive Trade Union Tactics. The Lovestoneites have been charged with pursuing anti-working class trade union practices.

"In every organization where the Lovestoneites manage to worm their way, they foster Red-baiting, disruptive reactionary policies, and urge surrender to the bosses. . . ."⁵

"The Lovestone group supports and encourages every Red-baiter and fascist agent. . . ."⁶

In the Auto Workers Union, the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, in the Maritime Union, and elsewhere, the Lovestoneites have been accused of joining with "degenerate disrupters" to fight A.F. of L. and C.I.O. unity and to bring about the downfall of incumbent administrations by "raising the 'Red' scare" and "blandering the Communist Party".⁷

Conclusion

On the basis of its analysis, the Communist party has concluded that "Lovestone works for Fascism"¹ and the "Lovestoneites fight in the interests of Fascist warmongers".² Members of the C.P. have been warned against Lovestoneites. The Communist party has raised two slogans: (1) Drive the Love-

²Ibid., pp. 738-739.

³Ibid., p. 739.

⁴Ibid., p. 736.

⁵Ibid., p. 734.

⁶Ibid., p. 736.

⁷Ibid., pp. 734-736, 741.

¹Ibid., p. 736.

²Ibid., p. 737.

stoneites out of the labor movement.³ (2) No Communist party member may have any "personal or political relationship" with "confirmed" Lovestoneites.⁴

³Ibid., p. 741.

⁴C.P., U.S.A., Constitution and By-Laws, Article VI, Section 14, p. 13.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE COMMUNIST PARTY -- CRITICISM OF THE TROTSKYISTS

Prior to 1935

Petty-Bourgeois Roots. The Communist party's criticism of "Trotskyism" is based upon an analysis which has placed the latter's social roots in a well-defined economic class. It does not treat "Trotskyism" as a mere individual manifestation, but rather as a product of the wants and aspirations of the petty-bourgeoisie.¹ Trotskyists have thus been accused of attempting " . . . to substitute their petty-bourgeoisie ideology for the great teachings of Marx and Lenin . . ."²

"Trotskyism is the vanguard of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie."³

"The understanding of Trotskyism as representing the influence of the petty bourgeoisie on certain elements of the proletariat and of the Communist Party was repeatedly expressed in the resolutions of the Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Thus the Thirteenth Congress (1924) declared:

" 'In the person of the present opposition we face not only an attempt to revise Bolshevism, not only a direct moving away from Leninism, but also a clearly expressed petty-bourgeois deviation. There is not the slightest doubt that this opposition objectively reflects the pressure of the petty bourgeoisie on the positions of the Party of the proletariat and its policies.' "⁴

" . . . Trotskyism is not a one-man affair. It is not a peculiarity of an individual. Trotskyism is a social phenomenon But even if Trotsky did not exist, the brand of opposition to the revolution which he represents would find its expression. Trotskyism is being reborn on every stage of the revolutionary movement because it is the expression of the attitude of a certain class, namely the petty bourgeoisie."⁵

¹Olgin, "Trotskyism--Counter-Revolution in Disguise, pp. 17-21.

²Voroshilov, Stalin and the Red Army, p. 43.

³Stalin, Questions Concerning the History of Bolshevism, p. 11.

⁴Olgin, op. cit., p. 20.

⁵Ibid., p. 17.

Left Social Fascism. In keeping with the theory of social-fascism, prevalent during the period following the Sixth World Congress, Trotskyism was characterized as " 'left' Social Fascism". This category was regarded by the C.P. as even more dangerous than " 'right' Social Fascism", because, while pretending to be ultra-revolutionary, Trotskyism was really giving the maximum aid and comfort to the cause of fascism.

"But the most insidious and dangerous to the workers of all this crop of demagogues are the so-called 'left' Social Fascists. The substance of their activities is, while giving practical support to the right Social Fascists, to criticize them in the name of revolution. They are the radical phrase-mongers par excellence. . . . Trotsky belongs to this general category. . . ."⁶

Trotsky's Reputed Break with Marxism-Leninism. Stalin has asserted that Trotskyism constitutes a three-fold break with the principles of Marxism-Leninism: (1) The denial of the possibility of building socialism in one country by the advocacy of the theory of permanent (continuous) revolution. (2) The underestimation of the role of the peasantry in socialist reconstruction. (3) The rejection of Bolshevik discipline.⁷ Each of these criticisms will be briefly considered.

The Theory of Permanent Revolution. The contention of Stalin and his followers, that Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution was of Menshevist origin and was opposed by Lenin (whose views were identical with those of Stalin in supporting the theory of socialism in one country), has already been discussed.¹ It now remains to present the essential points of Communist criticism of this doctrine.

Communists have asserted that history has proved Stalin, and not Trotsky, correct on the possibilities of building socialism in the Soviet

⁶Foster, Toward Soviet America, p. 195.

⁷Stalin, The October Revolution, pp. 88-90; Leninism, Vol. II, pp. 145-146, 391-394. Olgin, op. cit., pp. 48-49.

¹See Stalin's version of the Stalin-Trotsky controversy, supra.

Union.² For one thing, Trotsky's allegation of "the hostile collision" of the proletarian vanguard with "the broad masses of the peasants" has never matured, Stalin has declared;³ and again, socialism is actually being achieved in the U.S.S.R.⁴

"There is no doubt that the universal theory of the simultaneous victory of revolution in the principal countries of Europe, the theory that the victory of socialism in one country is impossible, has turned out to be an artificial and untenable theory. The seven years' history of the proletarian revolution in Russia speaks not for but against this theory. This theory is unacceptable not only as a scheme of development of the world revolution, for it is in contradiction to obvious facts. . . ."⁵

"Well now, is it possible to build socialist economy in our country without the victory of socialism being first achieved in other countries, without direct assistance in technique and equipment from the victorious proletariat of the West? And it is not only possible, but necessary and inevitable. For we are already building socialism by developing nationalized industry and linking it up with agriculture, by implanting co-operation in the countryside and bringing peasant economy into the general system of Soviet development, by reviving the soviets and merging the state apparatus with the vast masses of the population, by building a new culture and fostering new social activity. . . ."⁶

Stalin has intimated that Trotsky's fundamental theoretical error lies in his failure to take cognizance of new factors which have arisen under imperialism: the uneven development of capitalism.⁷

" . . . Formerly the triumph of revolution in a single country was considered impossible, for, it was said, the combined action of the proletarians of all, or at least of a majority, of the advanced countries was necessary to defeat the bourgeoisie. This point of view no longer tallies with the facts. It has now become necessary to concede the possibility of victory over the bourgeoisie in a single country because the uneven and sporadic development of the capitalist countries under imperialism, the aggravation of the catastrophic internal contradictions of imperialism, leading inevitably to war and the strengthening of the revolutionary movement in every country of the world, lead, not only to the possibility, but

²Stalin, Leninism, Vol. I, pp. 110-114, 133-136, 169, 206, 231, 264-266, 296-297.

³Ibid., Vol. I, p. 112.

⁴Manuilsky, The Rise of Socialism in the Soviet Union, p. 38. E.C.C.I., Resolutions--Seventh Congress of the Communist International, pp. 53-54. Stalin, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 133, 231.

⁵Ibid., p. 133.

⁶Ibid., p. 231.

⁷Stalin, Foundations of Leninism, p. 42. Popov, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 303-305. Olgin, op. cit., pp. 29-32.

to the necessity of the victory of the proletariat in individual countries. The history of the Russian Revolution is a striking proof of that. . . ."⁸

Stalin has not denied that ". . . for the complete victory of socialism, for complete security against the restoration of the old order; the united efforts of the proletarians of several countries are necessary. . . ."⁹ But he has declared that the success of socialism in the Soviet Union will pave the way for successful revolutions elsewhere.¹⁰

Trotsky's theory, on the other hand, it has been asserted, not only makes the decay of the Bolshevik revolution and defeat of socialism in the Soviet Union imminent,¹¹ but actually leads to the restoration of capitalism as well.¹²

"The capitalist arguments that 'it is impossible' also found their echoes within the Communist party of the Soviet Union, where they reflected the despair of the defeated and declining capitalist remnants in the U.S.S.R. Their outspoken representative was Trotsky. . . ."¹³

"The entire course of the class struggle everywhere proves conclusively that Stalin's policy leads to socialism and that Trotsky's program is anti-revolutionary and leads back to capitalism. . . .

"The essence of Trotskyism is capitalistic, not socialistic. Nor can all Trotsky's loud mouthing of ultra-radicalism mask this basic fact which everyday events in the world class struggle make clear as light. . . . It is precisely because Trotsky's program leads away from socialism rather than toward it that the masses in the U.S.S.R., and the most advanced workers in all lands, reject it. . . ."¹⁴

The Role of the Peasantry in Socialist Construction.¹ Communists have denied what they regard as a basic assumption of Trotsky, namely, that the peasantry cannot be depended upon to aid the proletariat in building social-

⁸Stalin, op. cit., p. 42.

⁹Stalin, Leninism, Vol. I, pp. 116-117, 169. Also See Stalin, A Letter to Ivanov, pp. 9-14.

¹⁰Stalin, Leninism, Vol. I, pp. 133-136.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 117-119, 206. Olgin, op. cit., pp. 26-27.

¹²Foster, Toward Soviet America, pp. 125-126; Questions and Answers on the Piatakov-Radek Trial, pp. 32-33.

¹³Foster, Toward Soviet America, p. 125.

¹⁴Foster, Questions and Answers on the Piatakov-Radek Trial, pp. 33-34.

¹Olgin, Trotskyism--Counter-Revolution in Disguise, pp. 37-49. Stalin, Leninism, Vol. I, pp. 164-165, 213-214.

ism in the Soviet Union, and rather tend to act as a counter-revolutionary force.² They have maintained that it was Lenin's thesis that the peasantry would serve a double purpose: first, to unite as a whole with the proletariat in a bourgeois-democratic revolution which, among other things, would abolish the last remnants of feudalism; second, to unite in part (the poorer elements of the peasantry) with the proletariat to establish a dictatorship of the proletariat.³ Communists have contended that this is precisely what happened. They have pointed to the role of the peasants in the Red Army, in establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat and in maintaining it.⁴

"When the proletariat under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party expropriated the manufacturers and bankers in the early stages of the socialist revolution in Russia, who was it that formed its armed force? The Red Army in which the peasants formed a large part. When the rebellions of the kulaks against the Soviet power on the Volga and in many other districts of Russia had to be quelled in 1918-1920, who did it? The same Red Army in which the poor and middle peasants were numerically strong. When the proletariat began to 'dekulakize' the rich peasants with the introduction of collectivization in the villages, who was its main support and who were its allies? Its main support were the poorer peasants in whose interests it was to carry out such expropriation. Its allies were the middle peasants. Suppose there were an attack upon the Soviet Union -- who would be in the first ranks of defense? The Red Army, which consists of workers and collective farmers."⁵

Stalin has also declared that the implications of Trotsky's thesis on the peasantry go contrary to accomplished fact. The peasantry has submitted to collectivization; it has not attempted to restore capitalism, as, Stalin alleges, Trotsky has intimated.⁶

"The essence of Trotskyism consists, secondly, in denying the possibility of drawing the basic masses of the peasantry into Socialist construction in the countryside. What does this mean? It means that the working class is not strong enough to lead the peasantry after it in the task of shunting

²Olgin, op. cit., p. 37.

³Ibid., pp. 40-43.

⁴Ibid., pp. 47-48.

⁵Ibid., pp. 47-48.

⁶Stalin, Leninism, Vol. II, p. 392.

the individual peasant farms on to collective farms and that, if in the near future the victory of the world revolution does not come to the aid of the working class, the peasantry will restore the old bourgeois system. Consequently, we have here the bourgeois denial of the strength and opportunities of the proletarian dictatorship for leading the peasantry to Socialism, covered with the mask of 'revolutionary' phrases about the victory of the world revolution. Given such views, is it possible to bring the peasant masses into the collective farm movement, organise a mass collective farming movement, or organise the liquidation of the kulaks as a class? Clearly it is impossible.

"Hence it follows that, in order to organise the mass movement of the peasantry towards collective farming and to liquidate the kulaks, we had, first of all, to bury the bourgeois theory of Trotskyism about the impossibility of winning the toiling masses of the peasantry to Socialism."⁷

Theory of Party Organization. Communists have accused Trotsky of denying the necessity for, and discrediting, the monolithic organization of the Bolshevik party. They contend that he has rejected the conception of a unified, well-disciplined party in favor of one composed of groups, fractions, and blocs, consisting of Mensheviks and Bolsheviks, among others.⁹

"The essence of Trotskyism consists, lastly, in the denial of the necessity of iron discipline in the Party, in recognition of the freedom of fractional groupings in the Party, in the recognition of the necessity of constituting a Trotskyist party. For Trotskyism, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union must be not a united and single militant Party, but a collection of groups and fractions, each with its own organisation, Press and so forth. . . Given such views of the Party, is it possible to ensure the iron discipline of the Party and safeguard iron unity in the Party, so necessary for successful struggle against our class enemies? Obviously it is not."¹⁰

From the viewpoint of Stalin, Trotsky's alleged rejection of Bolshevik discipline simply boiled down to the fact that he, Trotsky, was desirous of substituting his own conceptions of a Bolshevik Party for those of Lenin.¹¹

⁷Idem.

⁸Stalin, The October Revolution, pp. 87-94; Leninism, Vol. II, pp. 391-394.

⁹Stalin, The October Revolution, pp. 88-89; Leninism, Vol. II, p. 393.

¹⁰Stalin, Leninism, Vol. II, p. 393.

¹¹Stalin, The October Revolution, pp. 92-93.

Since 1935

Fascist Agents. The charges preferred against Trotsky and his followers at the Moscow Trials (1936-1938) by the Soviet Union have led the Communist International to sharpen its criticism of "Trotskyism" and intensify its world-wide drive to "expose the Trotskyites" as the greatest enemies of the working class. The gist of its new criticism has been that, although at one time the Trotskyists comprised a faction, however mistaken, within the Soviet Union and the Communist International, they have degenerated, since 1928, into an unprincipled band of wreckers, saboteurs and fascist agents.¹²

" . . . In carrying on a struggle against the Trotskyite agents, our Party comrades did not notice, they overlooked the fact that present-day Trotskyism is no longer what it was, let us say, seven or eight years ago; that Trotskyism and the Trotskyites have passed through a serious evolution in this period which has utterly changed the face of Trotskyism; that in view of this the struggle against Trotskyism and the method of struggle against it must also be utterly changed. Our Party comrades did not notice that Trotskyism has ceased to be a political trend in the working class, that it has changed from the political trend in the working class which it was seven or eight years ago, into a frantic and unprincipled gang of wreckers, diversionists, spies and murderers acting on the instructions of the intelligence service of foreign states."¹³

"The mistake of our Party comrades is that they did not notice this profound difference between Trotskyism in the past and Trotskyism at the present. They did not notice that the Trotskyites have long since ceased to be people devoted to an idea, that the Trotskyites have long since turned into highway robbers, capable of any foulness, capable of all that is disgusting, to the point of espionage and the outright betrayal of their country, if only they can harm the Soviet government and Soviet power. . . ."¹⁴

Restoration of Capitalism in U.S.S.R. The only principles accredited to the Trotskyists by Stalin are: the destruction of the Socialist Soviet Union, by whatever means possible, including collaboration with the fascist-

¹²Stalin, Mastering Bolshevism, pp. 14-20; Defects in Party Work and Measures for Liquidating Trotskyite and Other Double-Dealers, pp. 12-17.

¹³Stalin, Mastering Bolshevism, p. 14.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 17-18.

aggressor nations; the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union and its preservation elsewhere.¹⁵

"The restoration of capitalism, the liquidation of the collective farms and state farms, the restoration of the system of exploitation, an alliance with the fascist forces of Germany and Japan to bring war against the Soviet Union nearer, a struggle for war and against the policy of peace, the territorial dismemberment of the Soviet Union, giving the Ukraine to the Germans and the maritime provinces to the Japanese, the preparation of the military defeat of the Soviet Union if enemy states should attack it, and, as a means of achieving these tasks, wrecking diversion, individual terrorism against the leaders of the Soviet government, espionage for the benefit of the Japanese and German fascist forces -- such was the political platform of present-day Trotskyism. . . ."¹⁶

Opposition to People's Front. Further evidence offered to substantiate Communist charges against Trotskyism is the general opposition of the Trotskyists to the policies of the People's Front. This opposition has been characterized as "criminal stupidity" which plays directly into the hands of Franco, Hitler and Mussolini.¹⁷

Spain. In Spain, Trotskyist opposition to the People's Front was alleged to have taken the proportions of espionage against the Loyalist government in behalf of the Spanish rebel, General Franco, and his cause. Such is the charge made against the Spanish P.O.U.M., in which, it was charged, the Trotskyists have been active participants.¹⁸

Fourth International. The organization of the Fourth International by the Trotskyists, because of its "anti-working class policies" has therefore been characterized as " . . . a summing up of the main features of the vanguard of counter-revolution."¹⁹ Stalin has alleged that two-thirds of its

¹⁵ Foster, Questions and Answers on the Piatakov-Radek Trial, pp. 23,33. Daily Worker, Jan. 25, 1937, p. 1.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 16.

¹⁷ Foster, From Bryan to Stalin, pp. 333-334.

¹⁸ Soria, Trotskyism in the Service of Franco--A Documented Record of Treachery by the P.O.U.M. in Spain, *passim*. Browder, The People's Front, pp. 279-281.

¹⁹ Bittelman, Trotsky the Traitor, p. 27.

Olgin, Trotskyism--Counter-Revolution in Disguise, p. 141.

membership " . . . is made up of spies and subversive agents. . . ."20

American Trotskyists (Socialist Workers Party)¹

Since the Trotskyists, organized as the Fourth International, have followed identical principles, strategy and tactics everywhere, the Communist party's criticism of the Trotskyist movement in the United States (the Socialist Workers Party) differs from its general indictment only in the matter of specific application.

Farmer-Labor Party. American Trotskyists have been severely condemned for their opposition to the C.P. conception of a Farmer-Labor party and for their unwillingness to help in its formation.²

Trade Union Policies. The indictment of the trade union activity of the Trotskyists follows a brief similar to that drawn up against the Lovestoneites.³ They have been referred to as "strikebreakers and counter-revolutionaries".⁴

Olgin had declared: "In the trade unions the Trotskyites are definitely a disintegrating influence. . . ."5 Similar charges of disruption have been made against the Trotskyists in the American Youth Congress.⁶

"The American people should see in these Trotskyite and Lovestoneite agents of fascism agents of the fascist war-makers and among the worst enemies of peace and democracy.

"They work like rats in the dark against the security of the U.S. and the freedom of the American people.

"They should be exposed for what they are."⁷

²⁰Stalin, Mastering Bolshevism, p. 33.

¹Olgin, op. cit., pp. 126-144.

²Foster, Questions and Answers on the Piatakov-Badek Trial, pp. 78-79. (The Socialist Workers Party has since come out in support of a Farmer-Labor Party.)

³Discussed supra.

⁴Foster, op. cit., p. 79.

⁵Ibid., p. 78.

⁶Ibid., p. 79.

⁷Daily Worker, Sept. 24, 1938, p. 6.

Conclusions

Since it has concluded that "Trotskyism is treachery reduced to a science,"¹ the Communist party has made two decisions concerning the Trotskyists: (1) The Trotskyists, in common with the Lovestoneites, must be completely rooted out of the trade unions, to the last one.² (2) Communist party members have been forbidden to have any dealings with them.³

Article VI, Section 14, of the Constitution of the C.P., U.S.A., has categorically declared:

"No Party member shall have personal or political relationship with confirmed Trotskyites, Lovestoneites, or other known enemies of the Party and of the working class."⁴

The Party Organizer, a monthly magazine intended for Communist party organizers (but available to the general public) has forcibly expressed the party's attitude toward the Trotskyists:

"Our Party must be mobilized 100 per cent to expose the counter-revolutionary aims of the Trotskyites, to wipe out their disruptive work. All Party members must be on the alert against these counter-revolutionary disrupters in the trade unions and in every mass organization. We must expose their disruptive actions so that the Trotskyites will be driven from the labor movement."⁵

"We must be more vigilant everywhere since the Trotskyites are subtle in their propaganda. They cover their counter-revolutionary deeds with 'revolutionary' phrases. We must prevent workers' libraries and bookshops from becoming a medium through which they spread their poisonous propaganda. Clean out the libraries and throw out Trotskyite literature."⁶

"It is not enough merely to repeat, what is absolutely true, that Trotskyism and Lovestoneism are agencies of fascism. It is necessary to discover and expose these agents of fascism in the daily work and struggle

¹Browder, The People's Front, pp. 308, 348.

²Daily Worker, Jan. 30, 1937, p. 2. "Drive the Trotskyites Out of the Labor Movement," Party Organizer, (Feb. 1937), Vol. X, No. 2, pp. 4-7. C.P., U.S.A., Resolutions of the Tenth Convention, p. 18.

³C.P., U.S.A., Constitution and By-Laws, Article IV, Section 14, p. 13.

⁴Idem.

⁵"Drive the Trotskyites Out of the Labor Movement," Loc. cit., p. 5.

⁶Ibid., p. 6.

for the democratic front and for building the Party. . . ."7

No Asylum for Trotsky. The C.P. has been exceedingly active in opposing all efforts to grant the right of asylum in the United States to Trotsky. It has declared that his coming to this country would result in great damage to the American workers.⁸

" . . . Trotsky's coming here would bode no good to either the American or the international struggle of the toiling masses."⁹

"The truth of the whole matter is that Trotsky wants to come to the United States because he believes it would provide a more favorable base for his operations. Mexico cramps his style, because the working class is almost solidly opposed to him. He believes that if he could get here, what with the workers not so politically conscious and alert to the meaning of his activities and with plenty of reactionary support, he would be able to fish in the troubled American waters and also to carry on more effectively his nefarious anti-Soviet attacks and general international counter-revolutionary agitation."¹⁰

⁷Browder, "For Greater Vigilance in the Struggle Against the Trotskyite-Lovestoneite Groups," Party Organizer, (July 1938), Vol. XI, No. 7, p. 14.

⁸Foster, op. cit., pp. 72-77. Browder, The People's Front, pp. 211-216.

⁹Foster, op. cit., p. 75.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 76.

PART IV

THE LOVESTONE MOVEMENT

CHAPTER XXV

THE INDEPENDENT LABOR LEAGUE OF AMERICA -- HISTORY

Expulsion From Communist Party -- 1929

The Independent Labor League of America was first organized in 1929 as the Communist Party, U.S.A. (Majority Group) by Jay Lovestone, Bertram Wolfe, Benjamin Gitlow, Will Herberg and others who had been expelled from the Communist Party in that year " . . . over the controversies which have arisen in our Party since the Sixth National Convention."¹ This expulsion was part of a larger movement inaugurated by Stalin and his supporters in the Comintern to purge the Communist International of its so-called Right Opposition, i.e., the alleged supporters of Bukharin in the latter's struggle against Stalin regarding the policies to be pursued by the Communist International.

For four years prior to his expulsion (1925-1929) Lovestone had been the General Secretary of the Communist Party, U.S.A.² (Closely associated with him had been Charles E. Ruthenberg who died in 1927.³) The policies of the Ruthenberg-Lovestone group had obtained the support of about 90% of the party membership.⁴

When the Sixth Convention of the Communist Party, U.S.A. met in 1929, (after the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International), it was in-

¹Gitlow, Some Plain Words on Communist Unity, p. 5. (Gitlow has since resigned from the Lovestone group. See Workers Age, November 1, 1934, p. 2)

²Lovestone, Pages from Party History, passim.

³Workers Age, March 6, 1937, p. 4; May 23, 1936, p. 7. Lovestone, Charles E. Ruthenberg, passim.

⁴Wolfe, What Is the Communist Opposition? p. 32.

structed by Stalin that the Comintern wanted Lovestone replaced by a member of the Foster Opposition group then existing in the American party.⁵ Lovestone and a group of followers were subsequently expelled from the C.P. Since they contended that their views had expressed the overwhelming opinion of the membership, they constituted themselves the Communist Party, U.S.A. (Majority Group). Nevertheless, only a comparatively small percent of the rank-and-file of the party membership followed Lovestone out of the party. In the Communist party itself, a great deal of uncertainty attended the change in leadership. After the smoke of battle had finally cleared, Earl Browder was named as Lovestone's successor, a post he has held to the time of this writing (1939).

In 1930, the Lovestone group issued a statement setting forth the grounds for its expulsion. It explained the policies it had pursued prior to 1929, during which time the Lovestoneites had been in the leadership of the Communist party. Since the official "line" adopted at the Sixth World Congress had been incompatible with the Lovestone policies, the change in leadership was peremptorily demanded, despite the confidence of the rank-and-file which the Lovestone leadership alleged it had enjoyed.⁶

The following were among the major issues which the Lovestoneites declared had separated them from the leadership of the Communist International:

(1) Lovestone's Theory of Exceptionalism.⁷ Lovestone contended that the strategy and tactics to be pursued in any country must of necessity differ from those pursued in other countries because of many indigenous factors to be found there; that the strategy and tactics of the Communist

⁵For an account of the Foster Opposition within the C.P. see Lovestone, Pages from Party History, pp. 8, 14, 27.

⁶Communist Party (Majority Group), The Crisis in the Communist Party, U.S.A., passim.

⁷Ibid., pp. 13-25.

party in the U.S.S.R., while basically sound and correct, were inadequate and inapplicable to other sections of the Comintern, as the United States, for example. Lenin's Infantile Sickness of Leftism was quoted in substantiation of the Lovestone group's contention:

"It is beyond question that the problem here as everywhere else, consists in the ability to apply the general and fundamental principles of Communism to the specific conditions in the objective development towards Communism -- the conditions which are peculiar to each country and which one must be able to study, understand and point out."⁸

(2) The Nature of American Imperialism. The Sixth World Congress, consistent with its affirmation that capitalism was about to enter its third and final period ("Third Period" Communism), held to the thesis that "American imperialism is about to reach its apex of development", i.e., that American capitalism was about to decline, thus making opportunities for revolutionary development greater.⁹ The Lovestoneites rejected this conclusion as based upon a faulty analysis. They contended that there was no indication that American capitalism was about to decline, but that revolutionary development was not incompatible nor inconsistent with imperialist stabilization.¹⁰

(3) Radicalization of the Masses.¹¹ The Sixth World Congress had declared that the 1928 presidential election had been a victory for finance capitalism in the United States; that the aggressive imperialist foreign policy being pursued by the U.S. government was driving the American workers sharply to the left, as evidenced by the numerous strikes, economic unrest, etc. The Lovestone group, on the other hand, rejected the orientation that the world (especially the United States) was on the eve of revolution. It

⁸ Ibid., p. 17.

⁹ Ibid., pp. 28-29.

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 29-31.

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 32-35.

contended that the American working class had not "entered the period of offensive struggle, of counter-attack, of revolutionary activity. . . ." ¹²

(4) United-Front-From-Below and Dual Unionism as Tactics. ¹³ The

Comintern expressed itself as favoring the establishment of dual (red) unions and of the united-front-from-below as the correct tactics for winning the support of workers to the Communist position in trade unions and workers' political parties and organizations. The Lovestoneites rejected this as a disastrous and fruitless approach, based upon a faulty analysis. ¹⁴

(5) Democratic Centralism. The Lovestoneites contended that the principal of democratic centralism (determination of issues by genuine party democracy, subsequently carried out by a centralized authority) had been violated; that the Russian section dominated the Communist International, although, at best, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was only the first among equals. ¹⁵

In a summary indictment, the expulsions were bitterly attacked. The new principles and tactics which were pursued by the Comintern, the Lovestoneites contended, would surely bring destruction to the Communist movement throughout the world.

"The crisis in which our movement finds itself today stands out in startling contrast to the splendid achievements made by our Party between the IV (1925) and the VI (1929) Conventions, but especially in the years 1927-1929. . . .

"Now, in less than six months, more than one-third of the members of the Central Committee, comprising essentially the entire former leadership of the Party, have been expelled. At the same time several hundred of the leading functionaries in the Party and in the mass organizations, have also been driven out. The Leninist policies, which our Party had developed thru years of successful work and struggle have been completely replaced by the worst sort of opportunist sectarianism, based upon a thoroughgoing revision of the basic strategy of Marxism and Leninism and of the traditional line of the

¹²Ibid., pp. 35.

¹³Ibid., pp. 41-44.

¹⁴These issues are discussed in greater detail, infra.

¹⁵Discussed, infra.

Communist International. . . .

"These conditions are not peculiar to this country alone. On the contrary, they are part of the chaos, confusion and demoralization that has been making steady headway in the international Communist movement since the VI World Congress (July-Aug. 1928). . . . There is not now one Party in the Comintern in which recent months have not witnessed the imposition of a most destructive Party regime, accompanied by thousands of mechanical actions, removals, and expulsions, by terror, disorganization and demoralization

"The central leadership of the Comintern has undergone a most profound transformation in the years since the VI World Congress (July 1928). The outstanding representative of the Comintern, Comrade Bukharin, the main reporter of the VI Congress and its officially recognized political leader has been branded as a 'right winger', has been accused of 'class collaboration', 'leaning towards Milyukovism' (!), and even worse, and has been removed from the Eccl. With him have gone, thru expulsion or removal, the oldest and most experienced revolutionary forces in the Comintern, the best known international figures: Zetkin, Serra, Ewert, Lovestone, Gitlow, Humbert-Droz, Roy, Jilek, etc. They have been replaced by a 'new leadership' (Molotov, Garlandi, Minor, Neumann, Thalmann, Gottwald, Kun), utterly incapable of leading a world Communist movement, unknown and without prestige among the proletarian masses. In effect the leadership of the Comintern -- which, as Lenin insisted, had to be ever broadened and shared in by the various Parties -- has now been narrowed down to a small clique, among whom Stalin alone is of any significance."¹⁶

"In the U.S.A. the revisionist line was first introduced in an open official form in the Address of the Eccl which reached this country towards the end of May 1929. This Address precipitated an immediate crisis. On its basis there arose the 'new leadership' with its 'new course'. Since then, every policy proposed, every document written, every step taken by the 'new leadership' -- and everything was done under the direct guidance of the Eccl -- has carried the revision of Leninism still further, has dragged the Party more deeply into the political morass in which it now finds itself."¹⁷

Since 1929

Shortly after its break with the official Communist party, when all efforts at unity proved fruitless,¹ the Lovestone group abandoned its appellation, Communist Party, U.S.A. (Majority Group) to avoid misunderstanding, and called itself simply the Communist Party (Opposition). It retained this designation until June, 1937, when the designation, Independent

¹⁶ Communist Party (Majority Group), op. cit., pp. 3, 4, 5.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 11.

¹ Gitlow, op. cit., passim.

Communist Labor League, was adopted.² (A previous motion of its National Buro to adopt a similar name, Communist Labor League, in August, 1935 did not materialize.³) The following summer (July, 1938) it adopted its present name, The Independent Labor League of America (I.L.L.A.). The change from Communist Party Opposition to Independent Communist Labor League and thence to the Independent Labor League of America was particularly significant, having its roots in the organization's changing perspective, necessitated basically by the new "line" adopted by the Communist International in August, 1935.

It was in these terms that the Independent Labor League of America set forth the reason for its new name:

"Unanimously, the convention decided to drop the word 'communist' from our name, altho it had always been included in previous years. Why was this step taken? Not because we have abandoned the principles and aims of communism but rather in order to make possible an even more effective struggle for these very principles and aims. In this country, the term 'communist', never very popular with the masses, has become thoroly identified with the hectic super-opportunism of the Communist Party, with its frenzied jingoism, with its sinister tactics of 'rule or ruin' in the labor movement, with its unscrupulous deception and double-dealing. The term, laden tho it may be with the great traditions of the Russian Revolution, has been sullied beyond redemption, at least for the present. Our repudiation of any connections with that reactionary, anti-proletarian outfit known as the 'Communist Party' would be incomplete and largely meaningless did we retain anything in our name that could possibly link us with it. Just as, after the great betrayal of 1914, Lenin dropped the name 'socialist' in order to fight more effectively for the ideals of socialism, so today we are dropping the name 'communist' in order to be able to pursue more effectively the great historical aims of communism!"⁵

This brief history of the Lovestone group is intended to serve as a bird's-eye view and a general introduction to the movement. Other significant aspects of its history are tied up with its changing perspectives

²Workers Age, June 12, 1937, p. 3.

³Workers Age, August 17, 1935, p. 3.

⁴Workers Age, July 16, 1938, p. 4.

⁵Workers Age, July 16, 1938, p. 4.

which are developed in the following chapters.

International Affiliations

International Communist Opposition. The early difficulties which beset the Lovestoneites in the United States manifested themselves in Germany and elsewhere.¹ As a result an International Communist Opposition was set up, to which the Communist Party (Opposition) affiliated. Its leading members included, among others, Heinrich Brandler and August Thalheimer of the German Communist Party Opposition, and Jay Lovestone and Bertram Wolfe of the Communist Party (Opposition), U.S.A. The differences which formerly had separated Lovestone from Brandler and Thalheimer² no longer existed.

The Independent Labor League of America has still affirmed its affiliation with the International Communist Opposition.³

The "London Buro".⁴ In order to broaden its international base, the International Communist Opposition is in turn affiliated with the International Bureau for Revolutionary Socialist Unity (the so-called "London Buro").⁵

" . . . This Bureau consists of Revolutionary Socialist Parties unattached to either the Second or Third Internationals, in Britain, Sweden, Germany, Spain, Italy, Holland, Czecho-Slovakia, Poland, Greece, Palestine, Rumania, and Bulgaria. It has contacts in twenty countries."⁶

Among its significant members are included the British Independent Labor party, the Spanish Workers Party of Marxist Unity (POUM), the French

¹Lovestone, Pages from Party History, p. 16.

²Wolfe, The Trotsky Opposition, p. 73.

³Workers Age, July 16, 1938, p. 4.

⁴Workers Age, Sept. 15, 1937, p. 2; Oct. 9, 1937, p. 2; Dec. 5, 1937, p. 2.

⁵Workers Age, Jan. 8, 1938, p. 2.; April 2, 1938, pp. 1-2; April 9, 1938, p. 4; Nov. 26, 1938, p. 4.

⁶International Bureau for Revolutionary Socialist Unity, A New Hope for World Socialism, p. 1.

United Proletarian party, and numerous other organizations.⁷

In February, 1938, A Conference of the London Buro met at Paris (the Revolutionary Socialist Congress). It attempted, in a general way to lay the basis for a "Revolutionary Marxist International".⁸ The fundamental principles set forth included the following: Militant class action against capitalism in all its aspects; rejection of the People's Front orientation; rejection of all forms of class collaboration; rejection of "social patriotism"; support of the struggles of oppressed colonial peoples for freedom; support of the revolutionary program of the P.O.U.M. in Spain; defense of the Soviet Union, but "advocacy of proletarian democracy"; acceptance of the revolutionary road to power (overthrow of the capitalist state and the establishment of a proletarian dictatorship during the transitional era to socialism).⁹

Lovestone has emphasized on numerous occasions that the basis for any sound international movement must be "exceptionalism":

"Firmness in principle is the first prerequisite and the principles of the class struggle are international. Flexibility of tactics and self-direction in organization are as much, prerequisites. The keystone is 'exceptionalism'. Without this, you cannot have a living revolutionary body."¹⁰

⁷Ibid., p. 2.

⁸Ibid., p. 1.

⁹Ibid., pp. 9-10. Workers Age, Jan. 8, 1938, p. 2.

¹⁰Workers Age, March 19, 1938, p. 3.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE INDEPENDENT LABOR LEAGUE OF AMERICA -- PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNISM

The political perspective of the Independent Labor League of America can best be presented by dividing the history of the movement into three distinct periods: (1) from the Sixth World Congress in 1928 until the Seventh World Congress in 1935; (2) from the Seventh World Congress until August, 1937; (3) since August, 1937. These periods mirror the changes which the Lovestoneites allege took place in the orientation of the Communist International and its leadership. During the period from 1928 until 1935, for example, the Communist Party Opposition was known as the "Right" Opposition because it criticized what it regarded as the ultra-leftist course of the C.I., in contrast to the Trotskyites who were known as the "Left" Opposition. Such terms as "Right" and "Left" Opposition were in a sense relative, as the following characterization made by the Lovestone group during this period disclosed:

" . . . The inner relations of the three main tendencies in the world Communist movement may be pictured as follows: the Leninist line of the International Communist Opposition, the ultra-left line of Trotskyism, and the official line of the ECCI, which stands between the Leninist line and the line of Trotskyism and which leans heavily towards the latter."¹

After 1935, however, the Lovestone group strenuously objected to such designation, since it could no longer be so described on the basis of its differences with the official Communist movement. Thus, in 1937 Bertram Wolfe repudiated a characterization of himself as a "right-wing communist". In a letter to the New Republic he took the Editors to task for such a

¹ Communist Party of United States (Opposition), Where We Stand, Vol. II, p.30.

statement in a biographical note. He declared:

"I have been a Communist since the founding of the Communist Party of the United States, to which I contributed. In so far as it had Right tendencies in it, neither I nor the Ruthenberg-Lovestone group with which I was associated, were ever connected with them. We were expelled in 1929 for: (1) insisting on the maintenance of party democracy, (2) for opposing union-splitting, (3) for favoring a working-class united front at a time when it was officially decreed that all but Communists were to be regarded as 'social-fascists'; (4) for opposing the mechanical carrying over of the same tactics to all lands without regard to the special conditions in each country.

"As the Communist Party was then adopting ultra-leftist tactics and preferred not to meet us on the above issues, it labeled us 'right-wingers, counter-revolutionists, and agents of American imperialism'. In other countries it found similar delightful names for our tendency. But it has since swung over to right-wing tactics of collaboration cabinets, united fronts with capitalist parties on the latter's terms, 'People's Fronts', support of war loans in nonfascist imperialist lands. Our stand is now denounced as 'ultra-leftist'. What happens to the label 'right-wing' when the Comintern has made a 180-degree turn and we criticize it from the Left?"²

The Communist Party Opposition from the Sixth to the Seventh World Congress -- 1929-1935

Basic Agreement with the Comintern. During this period, the Communist Party Opposition was in complete agreement with the principles of Marxism-Leninism as formulated by the Communist International: the inevitability of a forceful overthrow of capitalism; the necessity for a dictatorship of the proletariat in the transitional era to a socialist society; the leadership of the proletariat by the Communist party in preparation for and during its dictatorship; the organization of the Communist International and all its sections on the basis of democratic centralism; the unqualified defense³ of the Soviet Union from all its foes.

It also expressed its complete agreement with the Comintern on the latter's analysis of the Social Democracy⁴ and its principled stand against

²Bertram D. Wolfe, New Republic (June 23, 1937), Vol. LXXXI, No. 1177, pp. 191-192. Also see Herberg, The C.I.O.--Labor's New Challenge, pp. 21-22.

³Workers Age, July 1, 1934, p. 3. Wolfe, What Is the Communist Opposition, pp. 50-52.

⁴International Communist Opposition, "The Comintern and the International Communist Opposition," The Road to Communism (January, 1935), Volume II, No. 1, p. 19.

Trotskyism.⁵ It accepted the Comintern's analysis of the possibility of socialism in one country; it rejected Trotsky's thesis of permanent revolution, his Thermidorian conception of the Soviet state, and his evaluation of the need for a Fourth International.⁶

Throughout its writings and publications of the period, statements of this kind were found:

"The International Communist Opposition aims at neither building a new Communist Party nor a new Communist International. . . .

"The International Communist Opposition whether inside the Party or expelled, whether minority or majority of the Communist Parties, is therefore a part of the Communist International and its sections. . . ."⁷

"The CPO is not a new party. It is an organized communist tendency. The Communist Party (Opposition) is not a new party because it has no other principles and aims than those of communism, because it has no other purpose than the correct application of these principles and aims in the U.S.A. and in other countries."⁸

"The Communist Party of the United States (Opposition) is a part of the Communist movement of the United States and of the international Communist movement. It stands for the reunification of the Communist Party of the United States, which has been split into three currents or tendencies, and for the reunification of the Communist International, which has been similarly divided. Its differences with the official leadership of the Communist Party and the official leadership of the Communist International, are not differences of basic principles nor fundamental aims. Our differences with the official leadership are on the question of tactics, the best methods of reaching our common aim and goal."⁹

Socialism in One Country. In the matter of the controversy between Stalin and Trotsky on the issue of "socialism in one country" versus "permanent revolution", the International Communist Opposition upheld Stalin's position, maintaining: that Lenin himself had stood for "socialism in one

⁵Wolfe, The Trotsky Opposition, passim. (Written before Wolfe's expulsion from the C.P.)

⁶Wolfe, What Is the Communist Opposition? pp. 39-52.

⁷Communist Party of the United States (Opposition), Where We Stand, Vol. I, p. 4.

⁸Workers Age, July 1, 1934, p. 3.

⁹Wolfe, op. cit., p. 50.

country" as expounded by Stalin;¹⁰ that it is possible to build socialism in one country while preparing for world revolution; that both are not incompatible as the Trotskyists (whose contentions on this question, moreover, were declared to be "non-Leninist views"¹¹) allegedly maintained.¹²

"The I.C.O. rejects the attempt to look upon the theory of 'socialism in one country' (concretely, the affirmation of the possibility of building up socialism in the Soviet Union before the victory of the proletarian revolution in other countries) as the source of the ultra-left course in the C.I. It rejects, likewise, the attempt to find this source in a necessary contradiction between the interests of the Soviet Union and those of the international proletariat; on the contrary, it is of the opinion that the interests of the first country in which the working class rules and in which socialism is being built, coincide fundamentally and are in complete harmony with the interests of the sections of the toiling people in the rest of the world. . . .

"Altho the interests of the Soviet Union and those of the world revolution coincide fundamentally, it is nevertheless quite possible that methods and forms of struggle in countries in which the working class has not yet achieved power should not coincide with those in which this has already been accomplished. . . ."¹³

Furthermore, maintained the Lovestoneites, Stalin himself was cognizant of the fact that socialism does not and cannot stop at the Soviet frontiers, and he had said so time and again.

" . . . Whatever be the criticism we may level against Stalin, yet we never can stoop to deny that it was none other than Stalin himself who clearly said in reply to Trotsky at the Seventh Enlarged Plenum of the ECCI in December, 1926 that:

"The interests and tasks of the proletariat of the U.S.S.R. are interwoven and integrally connected with the interests and the tasks of the revolutionary movement in all countries and vice versa, the tasks of the revolutionary proletariat of all countries are inseparably connected with the tasks and achievements of the proletariat of the U.S.S.R. on the front of socialist construction."¹⁴

The International Communist Opposition categorically rejected the contention that Stalin's conception of "socialism in one country" had anything

¹⁰ Lovestone, Soviet Foreign Policy and the World Revolution, p. 29.

¹¹ Communist Party of United States (Opposition), Where We Stand, Vol. II, p. 32.

¹² Ibid., Vol. I, p. 15. Wolfe, op. cit., p. 42.

¹³ Communist Party of United States (Opposition), Where We Stand, Vol. I, p. 15.

¹⁴ Communist Party U.S.A. (Opposition), For Unity of the World Communist Movement, p. 11.

to do with the catastrophe of German Nazism and the crushing of the German Communist party by Hitler:

"Especially is it necessary to expose all attempts to attribute the tactical mistakes of the CI and the CPG and the defeat of the German working class to the alleged national interest of the Soviet Union. The assertion that the theory of Socialist construction in one country has made the Russian Communists sacrifice the interests of the workers of other countries, must be branded as dangerous anti-Bolshevism. . . ."¹⁵

As final proof of the correctness of their position, the International Communist Opposition quoted Lenin in support of its endorsement of Stalin's general line:

"Uneven economic and political development is an absolute law of capitalism. From this it follows that the victory of Socialism at first in a few, or even in a single country taken separately, is possible. The victorious proletariat of this country (where the proletarian dictatorship is in force. -- J.L.), having expropriated the capitalists and organized Socialist production in its own country would rise against the rest of the capitalist world, attract to its side the oppressed classes of other countries, raise revolt against the capitalists of those countries and, if necessary, take up arms against the exploiting classes in those states." (Our emphasis)."¹⁶

Ultimate Objective of the Communist Party Opposition. The goal and objective of the Communist Party Opposition was to restore unity within the ranks of the Communist movement, and, more specifically, to secure re-installment within the official party on the basis of Lenin's organizational principle of democratic centralism. On this basis it hoped to win adherents within the Communist party to its own conception of what constituted a correct application of communist principles.

"We hold that there is no room for the existence of two Communist parties in any country. The Communist Party (Opposition) is not a new Communist Party. It stands for the unity of all Communist forces into a single Communist Party, on the basis of the above basic principles, and insists that differences on tactics, on how to attain our aims, can and should be settled by comradely discussion inside the ranks of the party, and not by the splitting and division of the Communist movement. . . .

"We do not insist that the official party adopt our tactical views as a condition for unity. We ask merely for normal party democracy and the

¹⁵ Communist Party of United States (Opposition), Where We Stand, Vol. I, p. 28.

¹⁶ Lovestone, op. cit., p. 29.

right to advocate our views before the party membership. The Communist Opposition considers as one of its basic tasks the fight for party unity."¹⁷

The technique which the Communist Party Opposition used in attempting to accomplish its objective was a two-fold one. Sensing futility in further directing its own efforts at convincing the official C.P. leadership of its tactical errors, it endeavored to make its point of view known among the rank-and-file in the Communist party; it thus hoped that a strong undercurrent of dissension would make itself felt and compel a change in tactics. In addition, it attempted to build up its own movements independently by winning workers over to the revolutionary class struggle in the trade unions and by educating them to an understanding of its viewpoint, leading such new converts directly into the Communist Party Opposition. By thus exerting pressure upon the official Communist party in these ways, it hoped to attain its goal of Communist unity.

In answer to the question, "What is the goal of the Communist Party (Opposition)?" its official organ declared:

"a) The winning over of the members of the Communist Party and of other sections of the Comintern to the correct communist tactics; in other words the winning over of the party members and the members of the Communist International to these tactics.

"b) At the same time, however, as long as the official Party and the Communist International are using false tactics, the Opposition systematically and energetically strives to give leadership to the struggle of the working class and thus to win followers within the working class as a whole, as well as within the Communist Party. The International Communist Opposition considers the extension of its influence among the great mass of workers as the most effective way of demonstrating in life the correctness of its tactical strategy and of winning over the rank and file members of the official Communist Parties for its line and thus assuring the realization of world Communist unity."¹⁸

If the Communist Party Opposition attained its objective (readmittance

¹⁷Wolfe, op. cit., p. 51-52. Also see Gitlow, Some Plain Words on Communist Unity, pp. 14-18. Communist Party (Opposition), Where We Stand, Vol. IV, p. 17.

¹⁸Workers Age, July 1, 1934, pp. 3,7. Also see Communist Party (Opposition), Where We Stand, Vol. IV, p. 32.

into the official party with the right to express and fight for the adoption of its views before the party membership), it declared that it was prepared to do exactly as the Communist Party Opposition of Germany, faced with a similar situation, had pledged itself to do:

"1. To carry out all the decisions of the Communist Party. . . and the Communist International in a disciplined fashion.

2. To accept all those decisions which aim at the liquidation of the ultra-left course.

3. To dissolve the Communist Party . . . (Opposition) as a fraction after unity with the Communist Party. . . .

4. We demand no special, factional privileges in the C.P. . . and the C.I.; we merely demand inner-Party democracy for all Party members. . .

. . . It is understood that inner-Party democracy is not limited to the basic Party units but to every section of the organization from the lowest to the highest, including the Party press."¹⁹

The Communist Party Opposition from the Seventh World Congress (1935) to 1937.

New Differences Arise. The Seventh World Congress of the Communist International, held in the summer of 1935, considerably influenced the orientation and perspective of the Communist Party Opposition. Already, almost a year before the Congress met, the Communist Party Opposition pronounced that a new era, "under the irresistible pressure of events", had been inaugurated; that in practice, at any rate, the Communists had abandoned their theories of dual unionism, social-fascism and the united-front-from-below.¹

"From all indications, the seventh congress of the Communist International, to take place sometime next year, is being planned as a dramatic demonstration of this new turn, as a congress of the united front and trade union unity."²

In conformity with its avowed policy of leaving no stone unturned to restore unity in the Communist movement on a principled basis, the Interna-

¹⁹International Communist Opposition, "For Communist Unity in Germany," The Road to Communism (January, 1935), Volume II, No. 1, pp. 7, 24.

¹The Communist Party (Opposition), Where We Stand, Vol. IV, pp. 28-29.

²Ibid., p. 28.

tional Communist Opposition wrote to the Executive Committee of the Communist International (and again later to the Congress while in session) asking permission to participate in the Congress, inasmuch as the original invitation had been extended to "all Communists, Social Democrats and independent workers and trade unionists".³ Its letters were never answered, and the International Communist Opposition did not participate. It nevertheless continued its agitation for unity.⁴

The results of the Congress were extremely disappointing to the International Communist Opposition; if anything, the chasm which separated the ICO from the CI was widened and the rift became even greater. Formerly the differences separating the two were chiefly on questions of tactics. After the Seventh World Congress, the introduction of the People's Front orientation added differences of principle to those of tactics, and made unity less likely than ever before.

"Thus today the differences between the C.I. and the I.C.O. are not only of a tactical nature. The I.C.O. continues to adhere to communist principles and to apply these to the concrete situation in each country. The C.I. -- outside the Soviet Union -- has, however, abandoned communist principles on two vital fields (struggle against imperialist war and fascism and attitude towards bourgeois democracy). This break with communist principles by the Communist Parties outside of the USSR is revealed crassly in their identifying themselves with the policies on war programmatically advocated by Comrade Dimitroff, . . .

" . . . Until recently it was a matter of tactical dispute over ways and means of fighting the bourgeois state, of defeating fascism. However, with the support of the bourgeois (democratic) state in war and peace, communist principles have been abandoned. We, therefore, declare that our re-entry into the C.I. and its sections can now be effected only on the following conditions: (a) complete re-establishment of inner party democracy; (b) return to communist principles."⁵

Goal Unchanged. Despite these added differences, the fundamental and

³International Communist Opposition, "The Need for Communist Unity", The International Class Struggle (Summer, 1936), Vol. I, No. 1, p. 29.

⁴Workers Age, Oct. 19, 1935, pp. 1-2.

⁵Draft Resolution of the CPO on Relations to the Comintern, " Workers Age, Sept. 19, 1936, p. 2.

basic orientation of the International Communist Opposition and the Communist Party Opposition in the United States remained for some two years following the Congress. During this period the belief of the ICO in the honesty and integrity of the leadership of the CI remained unshaken. Despite its allegation that the change in the line of the Communist International had not been democratically arrived at,⁶ the ICO nevertheless held that the mistakes were honest mistakes; that when the inevitable repercussions of these alleged errors of tactics and principles became apparent, the Comintern would have to change its position once more -- in the correct direction -- to avert disaster; that despite its errors, the Communist International was still the only international working class movement, and while it was necessary to exert pressure upon it to force a change in policies, it must not be abandoned in favor of another international working class movement.⁷

The Lovestone Group Since 1937

The adoption of a new name in 1937 (the Independent Communist Labor League) followed by another change in 1938 (the Independent Labor League of America) marked the final break between the Lovestoneites and the Communist party. It is not possible to present an adequate picture in the limited space available. But the general direction will very briefly be indicated.

Re-evaluation of Stalinism. The basic difference in the new "line" of the Lovestone-Brandler group seems to be its re-appraisal of the role played by Stalin in the Communist International and the Communist Party of

⁶International Communist Opposition, "The Need for Communist Unity," op. cit., pp. 29-32.

⁷Lovestone, People's Front Illusion, pp. 79-86.

the Soviet Union. Formerly its criticism explicitly held that although Stalin was completely mistaken in the policies he advocated for the Comintern and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, under the impact of world events he would be compelled to change his policies. It has now taken the position that Stalin and his small clique of followers are thoroughly corrupt and cannot be brought back to a correct path. The iron grip in which they hold the Communist International and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (both of which are still regarded as basically sound) must be broken; control of these organizations must be wrested from them. This is the task of the members of both organizations. In short, Stalinism must go!¹

" . . . Our organization is more convinced than ever that we were right in making, as we did -- in retrospect we can say we should have done it earlier -- a clean break with the growing system of corruption in the Communist International. We are more convinced than ever that we were right in denouncing and breaking with the system that made a world party a tail to a faction in the Russian party. Even the best of the Russians after Lenin's death, men like Trotsky, Zinoviev and Bukharin, failed to understand that. Our organization is more convinced than ever that today the Soviet Union can go forward only if the Russian communists and the Russian working class throw off the nightmare, monster yoke of Stalinism, that the labor movement elsewhere can flourish only if it repudiates as vile and obscene the gangster methods and the traitorous policies of Stalinism."²

The New Approach. Having finally abandoned its long cherished hope of unity with the Communist party, the I.L.L.A. has come forward with its own program and its new approach. Building upon the foundation of American "exceptionalism", the movement has gone forth to a new start. In a discussion prior to the Seventh National Convention of the I.L.L.A., Herberg set forth its new objectives:

"What is the role we aspire to in the light of this orientation? We

¹Workers Age, March 26, 1938, p. 5.

²Idem.

want to make our Group the political concentration of the most militant and advanced elements in every trade union, in every labor organization, on every field of the labor struggle. We want to make our Group into an effective instrument to serve the labor movement as a militant, inspiring, leavening force on every front. We want to be in a position to give real assistance to the labor movement towards greater clarity and class consciousness, and therefore towards greater effectiveness in the class struggle. . . ."³

"But for this, we must keep our eyes on America. Our program, our strategical course, our policies and tactics must be drawn from our own soil, from a systematic study of the conditions of the American class struggle in the light of Marxism. Of course, we must be ready to learn from experience abroad -- but this experience must be evaluated in the light of American reality and transmuted into American terms before it can be of direct practical value to us in our work.

"Our new orientation is an orientation of the most thoroughgoing, uncompromising independence. We have long lost our political kinship with official 'communism', our tendency to look upon things from the point of view of their relation to Stalinism. But independence means much more. It means the full recognition that we are out on our own, out to build a really new type of socialist (or communist) movement in this country, along fundamentally new lines. . . ."⁴

³Workers Age, June 25, 1938, p. 6.

⁴Idem.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE INDEPENDENT LABOR LEAGUE OF AMERICA -- STRATEGY AND TACTICS

Strategy and Tactics -- 1938

In November, 1938, Lovestone formulated a ten-point program¹ which can well serve as a perspectus of the Independent Labor League of America. In the presentation which follows, Lovestone's approach will be followed, but additional material will be introduced from other official sources.

Build Progressive Industrial Unions.² The primary requisite for a powerful working-class movement is the building of progressive trade unions along industrial lines, democratically managed and guided by principles of militant class struggle. These unions must fight for higher wages, shorter hours, better working conditions. They must involve the vast majority of American workers, if possible, and foster the development of "proletarian class-consciousness". They must be free from the domination and control of any single political party which would utilize them for partisan and factional purposes and the advancement of its own political objectives without regard to the effects upon the trade unions.

Trade Union Unity.³ The I.L.L.A. has gone on record as giving "Full support of the C.I.O. as the movement representing the future of unionism in this country."⁴ Nevertheless it has recognized the weakness inherent in

¹Lovestone, New Frontiers For Labor, passim.

²Lovestone, op. cit., pp. 13-15. I.L.L.A., Where We Stand, pp. 5-7. Workers Age, April 30, 1938, p. 4; July 23, 1938, pp. 1-2; August 13, 1938, p. 2; Nov. 12, 1938, pp. 3,5; Nov. 26, 1938, p. 4.

³Idem.

⁴Workers Age, Aug. 13, 1938, p. 2.

a divided labor movement. As a first step towards trade union unity, it has urged united action between the A.F.L., the C.I.O., and the Railway Brotherhoods.

"We are for the speediest unification of the A.F. of L. and the C.I.O. into one trade union movement on the basis of industrial unionism in the mass-production industries and the preservation of autonomy for the various international component bodies of both federations. The problem of trade union unity is most immediate and urgent. Today continuous dissension in the trade union movement paralyzes labor's power politically, cripples it economically, and invites dangerous government intervention and legislation. This division is all the more costly today because the forces of big business reaction are working overtime for an assault on the rights of labor and on social legislation. Trade union disunity undermines labor's effectiveness in meeting the burning problems of the economic crisis, tends to alienate public opinion, and creates a dangerous atmosphere of hostility toward the labor movement as a whole."⁵

For a Labor Party.⁶ The I.L.L.A. has favored the building an independent Labor party, based upon the trade unions, and also including farm workers and "friendly middle class forces". A Labor party is not regarded as a substitute for a Marxian, revolutionary political party, but an intermediary step designed to develop political consciousness among the farmers and workers of the United States, and separate them from their traditional attachment to the old political parties.

" . . . In the ranks of labor there is growing a realization of the need for active participation in politics as an independent force. . . .

"We give wholehearted, though often critical, support to this trend toward a labor party despite all its limitations and shortcomings. We do so because we see in it the first step toward the crystallization of labor as an independent, distinct, class force. . . ."⁷

Independent Political Action.⁸ The I.L.L.A. has opposed any program of cooperation with the bourgeoisie, whether called class collaboration, the People's Front, or by any other name. It is firmly convinced that when labor joins with its class enemies, in the political front or on the economic

⁵Lovestone, op. cit., pp. 14-15.

⁶Lovestone, op. cit., pp. 15-16. I.L.L.A., op. cit., pp. 7-8.

⁷Lovestone, op. cit., pp. 15-16.

⁸Lovestone, op. cit., pp. 16-17. I.L.L.A., op. cit., pp. 4-5. Workers Age, Aug. 13, 1938, p. 2.

front, it can do so only by abandoning its own program and accepting that of its enemies.

"The hub of all our activities and policies is independent working-class action against employing class reaction. With us it is cardinal that in the long run, the workers can depend upon nothing but their own organized strength. The more the workers learn to fight militantly and to depend upon themselves, the more will they be able to wring concessions from the government and the employers, and the more readily will they be able to secure the cooperation and the support of other sections of the population, such as the farmers and the urban middle classes, in a common struggle against big capital.

"Precisely because we stand for working-class independence do we consistently and firmly oppose political alliances with parties of the capitalist class along the lines of the People's Front, the original model of which is the French Government headed by Daladier -- now feverishly at work preparing the ground for fascism in France. Instead of strengthening the power of mass resistance to fascism and reaction, such alliances make the workers dependent upon the agencies of the biggest capitalists, convert the workers' organizations into auxiliaries of the employing class, cripple the organized might of labor, sow confusion, and foster disillusionment among the masses. In summary, this policy substantially strengthens reaction and paves the way for the triumph of fascism. As against the People's Front, we propose a united workers' front and a militant farmer-labor alliance, with the broadest middle-class support, on the basis of immediate issues and common interests in the fight against a common enemy -- big industrial and finance capital."⁹

Social and Labor Legislation.¹⁰ Although the I.L.L.A. has contended that it is fundamentally correct that capitalism cannot solve the problems of the working class, the Lovestone group has nevertheless recognized that this must not deter workers from wresting as many concessions as they can from the system which they are fighting. Consequently it has gone on record as favoring a most extensive program of social and labor legislation. In the former category, it has supported a federal program of public housing; the expansion of the W.P.A.; the extension of the Federal Social Security Act to include greater benefits, additional categories of workers, and wider fields. It has defended the Wagner Labor Relations Act against the reac-

⁹Lovestone, op. cit., pp. 16-17.

¹⁰Lovestone, op. cit., pp. 17-19. Workers Age, Aug. 27, 1938, p. 2; Sept. 3, 1938, p. 2; Sept. 10, 1938, p. 2.

tionary elements attempting to take away from labor such fundamentals as the right of strike, collective bargaining, and trade union organization. It has fought for additional legislation providing for minimum wages and maximum hours. It has supported the proposed Child Labor Amendment to the Constitution.

Finally, it has endorsed measures designed to introduce a greater degree of democratic control of government by the people: a Workers Rights Amendment to the Constitution giving Congress the right to enact social and labor legislation formerly held invalid by the Supreme Court; measures restricting the powers of the Supreme Court; reform of the Committee system in Congress which has put social and labor legislation at the mercy of reactionaries; extension of the system of proportional representation; direct election of all public officials; abolition of poll taxes, etc.

Defense of Negro Rights.¹¹ The I.L.L.A. has espoused a program guaranteeing to the Negro the same rights as those possessed by other American citizens. This program has included:

"1. Full economic, social and political equality for the Negro people. Enforcement of the Constitutional amendments and laws guaranteeing the Negroes full citizenship rights, including the franchise.

2. Against any variety of segregation or discrimination, whether in the form of jim-crowism or of an attempt to set apart the Negroes as a separate 'nation' distinct from the white people of this country (as advocated by the Stalinist doctrine of 'self-determination').

3. Support of federal anti-lynching legislation. Support of all equal rights legislation for Negroes.

4. Complete abolition of the color line in the labor movement and in the right to employment. Complete equality for the Negro workers in the ranks of organized labor."¹²

Opposition to American Imperialism.¹³ Although the United States is nominally a "democratic nation", the I.L.L.A. has held that its foreign

¹¹Workers Age, July 16, 1938, p. 2. I.L.L.A., op. cit., p. 8.

¹²Workers Age, Sept. 17, 1938, p.2 .

¹³Lovestone, op. cit., pp. 18-20. I.L.L.A., op. cit., pp. 8-9.
Workers Age, Aug. 20, 1938, p. 2.

policies are controlled and dominated by the imperialist needs of American Business; these interests constitute a grave danger to the security of American workers who may be called upon to defend them with their lives.

" . . . 'Dollar diplomacy' still dominates our foreign policy, altho today it is subtly disguised in the cloak of 'good neighborliness'. The tentacles of Wall Street reach out over the world, holding millions in the grip of economic exploitation and political oppression. In the Far East, in the Pacific, in the Caribbean, American warships and Marines are stationed to protect the investments and financial prospects of banks and big-business groups at home. Bloody dictators, such as Trujillo in Santo Domingo, Batista in Cuba and Vargas in Brazil, are kept in power by our State Department so that they can do the bidding of American finance capital. We demand an end to this policy of financial imperialism, the withdrawal of American naval and military forces from all colonial and semi-colonial regions, and the unrestricted right of self-determination for all American colonies and possessions."¹⁴

Fight Fascism and War. A fascist danger exists, the I.L.L.A. has declared, both abroad and in the United States. But the main danger to the American workers comes from within the country, it has been asserted.¹⁵ Fascism is a stage of development of the capitalist system, and when the capitalists cannot solve their problems under capitalist democracy, they seek another form, fascism. The workers must therefore direct their main efforts against the capitalist system under which they live if they wish to forestall a fascist regime in the United States.¹⁶

"For the working class, it is not only a question of fighting to prevent the spread of German Hitlerism and Italian fascism, but just as much to defeat the incipient manifestations of fascism in each capitalist country. The fact is that to the extent the working class understands and works successfully on this basis, will it be able to help the underground German and Italian working-class movements administer decisive defeats to their respective fascist-imperialist regimes."¹⁷

"The roots of this development can be found in the various important capitalist countries in the sharpened class relations within each country, in the difficulties capitalism experiences with its economy in this period

¹⁴I.L.L.A., op. cit., pp. 8-9.

¹⁵D.Benjamin, Workers Age, Nov. 26, 1938, pp. 3,5; Dec. 3, 1938, pp. 3,5.

¹⁶Idem.

¹⁷Workers Age, Nov. 26, 1938, p. 3.

of imperialism, in the imminence of war for national capitalist survival, imperialist hegemony and the maintenance of capitalist-class control and the heightened international competition for markets, raw materials, capital investments, colonies and strategic advantages."¹⁸

"The workers thruout the capitalist sector of the world, whether it be in 'democratic' or fascist lands, must recognize that their chief enemy is their own ruling class. The enemy, in the first instance, is at home. Most important is it for working classes in the 'democratic' countries not to be blinded by the democratic institutions of government but to be on the watch for the development of fascist manifestations therein. Fascism is entering thru the front door as well as thru the back door. German and Italian fascism must be fought, but so must developing fascism in France, England and Czechoslovakia, as well as the beginning of such trends in the United States."¹⁹

In order to aid in the fight against fascism abroad, the I.L.L.A. has advocated the following among other measures: assistance to the underground labor movement in fascist countries; lifting the arms embargo against Loyalist Spain and support of the policies of the P.O.U.M. in that country; promoting a consumers' boycott of the products of the fascist countries; placing a government embargo on the shipment of arms and munitions to fascist countries; the refusal of workers to transport war products and materials to such countries;²⁰ the rejection of all requests for loans and credits; the organization of workers to fight fascist propaganda in the United States.²¹

Opposition to War and War Preparations.²² The I.L.L.A. has warned the American workers that American participation in any impending war will mean fascism for the United States.²³ It has also warned them against en-

¹⁸ Idem.

¹⁹ Workers Age, Dec. 3, 1938, p. 6.

²⁰ Workers Age, March 5, 1938, pp. 3, 6.

²¹ Workers Age, Aug. 27, 1938, p. 2.

²² Lovestone, op. cit., pp. 18-20. I.L.L.A., op. cit., pp. 9-10.
Workers Age, Aug. 30, 1938, p. 2.

²³ Workers Age, Feb. 12, 1938, pp. 3-4.

deavoring to prevent war by the espousal of sanctions, collective security and other measures for "quarantining the aggressor-nations".²⁴

The I.L.L.A.'s struggle against war has centered about organizing a mass anti-war movement rooted in the working class, especially among the trade unions. It has been effective in helping build the Keep America Out of War movement, an organization based upon a minimum six-point peace program:

"1. The immediate removal of American ships and Marines from belligerent zones and the evacuation of American nationals who, if they stay, stay at their own risk; opposition to every expression of American imperialism.

2. No increase in the Army and Navy budget; work toward reduction of the present excessive military machine.

3. The democratic right of American citizens to vote on a declaration of war. [The Ludlow Amendment²⁵]

4. Abandonment of all existing plans for industrial mobilization and defeat of all new plans for universal conscription and regimentation, thus warning our militarists that the American people will not tolerate war abroad and war-dictatorship at home.

5. No alliance or joint action with any nation or group of nations for war, or which is likely to lead to war, declared or undeclared, under any name or any pretext.

6. At home, concentration on the struggle against injustice, unemployment, bad housing and poverty, and a determination by means of that struggle to seek out prosperity rather than to find it in war trade. Abroad, increasing solidarity with the people in all nations in the struggle to abolish economic injustice and colonial oppression, and to remove the causes of dictatorial militarism."²⁶

In its own program, the I.L.L.A. has gone beyond the Keep America Out of War Committee. It has consistently argued that the struggle against war and fascism, is a struggle for socialism against the capitalist system. In the event of war, it has advocated revolutionary defeatism: refusal to support one's own government; the making of every effort to turn the imperial-

²⁴Workers Age, Feb. 5, 1938, p. 4; March 12, 1938, p. 6. (These problems are discussed in criticizing the C.P. position on war, infra.)

²⁵Workers Age, Jan. 8, 1938, p. 2.

²⁶Workers Age, June 11, 1938, p. 3; Aug. 20, 1938, p. 2.

ist war into a civil war for the overthrow of the capitalist system.²⁷

Defense of the Soviet Union.²⁸ The attitude taken by the I.L.L.A. on the Soviet Union is discussed in great detail in the pages which follow. Its present position is that the workers of the world must rally to the defense of the U.S.S.R. but not to the support of its ruling bureaucracy, the Stalin coterie, which must be eliminated.

For Socialism. The I.L.L.A. has repeatedly reiterated its fundamental Marxist-Leninist thesis that only a socialist society, based upon socialist economy, can lay the foundation for a new social order free from depressions, unemployment, war and fascism.²⁹

"Socialism is our only hope for the future. But to remove the decaying structure of capitalism and replace it with a new social order -- that only a workers government -- a really democratic government of, by and for the working masses -- can accomplish. To organize themselves as a class striving to win political power: this is the great task confronting the workers of this country today. Taking the first steps along this road today, the American working class will not falter in its long uphill fight for a better life until a society without classes or class oppression, until a new social order making for peace, progress and well-being, is achieved!"³⁰

Party Organization

New Constitution. In its fundamental aspects, the organization of the I.L.L.A. does not differ from the other Marxian political parties. In July, 1938, it adopted a new Constitution providing, among other things, for full party democracy (freedom of discussion and democratic formulation of all party policies) and the enforcement of strict Marxian discipline after party policies have been reached.¹

²⁷I.L.L.A., op. cit., pp. 10-11. Workers Age, March 5, 1938, p. 3; Aug. 20, 1928, p. 2.

²⁸Lovestone, op. cit., pp. 20-21. I.L.L.A., Op. cit., pp. 11-12.

²⁹Lovestone, op. cit., pp. 21-22. I.L.L.A., op. cit., pp. 12-13.

³⁰Workers Age, Sept. 17, 1938, p. 2.

¹Workers Age, July 16, 1938, p. 4.

Youth Section. Among its more recent developments, the I.L.L.A. has attempted to create a strong and militant Youth section in its movement similar to the Young Communist League and the Young People's Socialist League. Its members in the Youth section of the party have been active in the American Student Union where they have opposed the following policies introduced by the Communist members of the A.S.U.: repeal of the Oxford Pledge; support of the policies of President Roosevelt; advocacy of collective security. The Youth Section of the I.L.L.A. has also been active in building up a youth movement affiliated to the Keep America Out of War Committee. The Youth Committee Against War, as the organization is known, has gone beyond the program of the Keep America Out of War Committee, and has adopted an eight-point program, close to that espoused by the I.L.L.A.²

²Workers Age, Feb. 13, 1938, pp. 3,5,6; June 25, 1938, pp. 3,5.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE COMMUNIST PARTY (OPPOSITION)
INDEPENDENT LABOR LEAGUE OF AMERICA --
CRITICISM OF OFFICIAL COMMUNIST MOVEMENT (1929-1935)

Criticism of the Communist International -- 1929-1935

Differences Tactical. The CPO's criticism of the Communist International was directed entirely to questions of tactics and inner party organization. Tactically, it regarded the "ultra-leftist" course pursued by the Comintern as ruinous: the theory of social-fascism, dual unionism, and the united-front-from-below tactic. It also condemned the alleged mechanical manner in which a general tactic, once adopted, was transferred to all sections of the Comintern, to be there followed in identical ways. Organizationally, it criticized the domination of the Communist International by the Russian Communist Party. More important still, it condemned the absence of democracy in the functioning of the Communist International, and the autocratic, high-handed manner in which decisions were reached and handed down to the rank-and-file membership.

Anticipating the criticism that, since its differences with the Communist International were tactical and not basic, the Communist Opposition should have submitted to the decisions of the Comintern after its own views failed of adoption, the Communist Opposition declared that this was not done for the following reasons:

- "a) Because the issues involved are over such tactical problems as will determine the very existence of the Communist Party.
- b) Because these decisions signify a breach with the tactical line

of Leninism.

c) Because these wrong decisions are not a result of democratic centralism, i.e. of free discussion by the party membership within the frame-work of communist methods, but are autocratic decisions of the leading bodies of the Communist Parties of the various countries of the Communist International."¹

The tactics pursued by the Communist International after its Sixth World Congress were characterized by the International Communist Opposition as a serious departure from Leninism whose bankruptcy was thoroughly established by the crushing defeat inflicted upon the Communist Party of Germany by the rise of Hitlerism.²

"The International Communist Opposition fights against the ultra-leftist course of the Communist International and its sections which represent a break with the tactical principles of Leninism, which contradicts the necessity of the class struggle practicably in its present stage, which makes the Communist Parties incapable of stimulating mass actions of the working class, of leading them and of winning the majority of the working-class for the revolution and which finally destroys the Communist Parties themselves by paralyzing the independence of its membership and by replacing democratic centralism by the absolute power of the Party bureaucracy. . . ."³

It should be especially noted that despite its thoroughgoing disagreement with the strategy and tactics of the Communist International, at no time did the Communist Opposition cast aspersions upon the integrity of the Communist International or impugn bad faith to Stalin or any of his associates. The Communist Opposition believed that the line of the Sixth World Congress, although incorrect, had been formulated in good faith.

"The fact that Stalin's ultra-left sectarian tactics in the Communist International have brought paralysis to the Comintern, particularly in the present moment of splendid opportunities for the development of the revolutionary movement against capitalism, does not mean that his intentions are bad or that his plans are to sacrifice the world revolution. It does mean that his present policies in the Comintern are wrong, are bad."⁴

¹Workers Age, July 1, 1934, p. 3.

²Communist Party (Opposition), Where We Stand, Vol. I, pp. 17, 26-27.

³Ibid., p. 4.

⁴Communist Party USA (Opposition), For Unity of the World Communist Movement, p. 11.

The Theory of Social-Fascism. The Communist Opposition rejected the underlying premises upon which social-fascism was posited, namely (as the Sixth World Congress of the Comintern asserted) that the era of capitalist stabilization was at an end and that a third and final period of capitalism, the final preliminary stage to world revolution, was about to be ushered in, to be followed by immediate attacks upon the citadels of capitalism throughout the world by an aroused, militant, class-conscious proletariat.⁵ The Communist Party Opposition rejected this as contrary to fact; it declared that the final stage of world capitalism was not at hand, that the masses were not preparing to overthrow the capitalist system (despite which fact the communist movement could still make rapid strides, given a correct approach and correct tactics).

By the Comintern's analysis, the masses were ready for revolutionary action. Since certain elements among them (notably the Social Democrats) acted as a restraining force, the latter were characterized as "the moderate wing of fascism", hence social-fascists; objectively considered, socialists aided the course of fascism by preventing revolutionary action by a large section of the working class which they controlled.⁶

The Communist Party Opposition rejected the theory of social fascism as well as the analysis giving rise to it.

"For years the theory of 'social fascism', as formulated in Comrade Stalin's classical words, 'Social Democracy is the moderate wing of Fascism', dominated the entire outlook of the party leadership. . . . Of course, we have always rejected this whole conception as altogether opposed to ordinary political common sense. We have always insisted that the Socialist parties are workers parties with reformist programs, that their influence over the workers has to be fought but that they must be approached and treated as workers' organizations. . . ."7

⁵ Communist Party of United States (Opposition), Where We Stand, Vol. IV, pp. 5-7.

⁶ International Communist Opposition, "The Thirteenth Plenum of the ECCI," The Road to Communism (May-July 1934), Volume I, No. 1, pp. 24-25.

⁷ Communist Party (Opposition), Where We Stand, Vol. IV, p. 45.

In its resolutions adopted on the Communist International in July 1932, the International Communist Opposition urged:

" (d) The abandonment of the false and dangerous 'theory' of 'social-fascism' which is only a pseudo-Marxist repetition of the liberal theory of Fascism, according to which Fascism cannot suppress the traditional bourgeois parties, including also the reformist parties, but must always constitute an auxiliary for them. The theory of 'social-fascism' is able only to prevent any real analysis of Fascism and of Social-Democracy and to weaken the recognition of the real danger of Fascism. It constitutes an obstacle in the way to winning the Social-Democratic workers to Communism."⁸

Dual Unionism. The Communist Party Opposition completely rejected the trade union policy set forth by Lozovsky at the Sixth World Congress in 1928. The disastrous policies pursued in the United States reflected this basic, fallacious orientation, the Lovestoneites alleged.

The basic orientation of the Comintern was that new, red unions should be set up as rivals, and in opposition, to existing trade unions in order to provide awakening class conscious workers with new unions based upon revolutionary principles and manned by revolutionary leaders. This was necessitated, the Comintern leadership alleged, by the hopeless conservatism and even fascist tendencies of the old unions, which could not be captured because of their reactionary leadership. (Earl Browder declared in the Communist, May, 1930: "The A.F. of L. is plainly a Fascist organization without any of the protective coloring of Socialist phrases which distinguishes social fascism."⁹) Once "red" unions were established, the C.P. argument ran, workers would desert their old unions and join the revolutionary unions which were more nearly in accord with their aroused class consciousness.

The Lovestoneites rejected this analysis completely. They did not believe that workers in general and those of the United States in particular

⁸Ibid., p. 14.

⁹Quoted in Communist Party (Opposition), Where We Stand, Vol. IV, p. 46.

had attained that stage of militancy which is a prelude to revolution, and on which basis, new, revolutionary unions were necessary. On the contrary, they argued, workers were exceedingly backward and far less militant than the circumstances often warranted, especially in the United States. This, without doubt, was due in a very large measure to the "anti-labor bourgeois reactionary trade union leaders". But the workers themselves who had thus been misled were still workers who must be given leadership, direction and trade-union and political education; this could not be done if Communists segregated themselves from the large body of workers and set themselves up into red unions to which workers would not go. The practical consequence of this type of dual organization was that Communists succeed in capturing only themselves. They failed utterly to accomplish the most important objectives which Communists should have in their trade union policies; to capture the unions; to displace the reactionary leadership by Communists; to replace the reactionary policies by militant policies; to convert backward workers into militant trade unionists and perhaps win over substantial numbers to membership in the Communist party.¹⁰

"From this viewpoint Communist strategy is categorically against any form of deserting or of splitting any existing unions. The whole struggle of Lenin and the Comintern against ultra-leftism in the early days of the existence of the CI centered around this point. Lenin held that those who refuse to work in reactionary trade unions and who invent 'spick-and-span revolutionary unions' commit an unpardonable blunder and render a great service to the bourgeoisie. . . ."¹¹

The results of the new perspective of dual (red) unions amply bore out the soundness of its analysis, the CPO alleged. Under its new policies, the affiliates of the Communist-controlled Trade Union Unity League were but paper unions, with small, insignificant followings; the A.F. of L,

¹⁰ Communist Party of United States (Opposition), Where We Stand, Vol. II, pp. 13-21.

¹¹ Communist Party of United States (Opposition), Where We Stand, Vol. II, p. 14.

was completely under the direction of reactionary elements; communists were not successful in any important strike movements; working class unity was disrupted by the social-fascist doctrine. In short, the C.P.O. charged that the Communists isolated themselves from the rank-and-file of the American workers by their sectarianism and faulty ultra-left analysis.¹²

The solution, as viewed by the CPO consisted in: (1) Abandonment of paper TUUL unions and restoration of unity in the trade union movement by re-entering the ranks of the A.F.L., the existing mass-base trade union. (2) The formation of a left-wing bloc in the A.F.L. (3) The organization of large sections of unskilled workers without labor affiliation into industrial unions.¹³

"The immediate task for the Communists at the present time should be to regain contact with the masses of the workers from whom the Party has been isolated thru its false policies. For this it is necessary to drop all illusions of the 'already existing mass Communist Party in the United States' and face facts as they are. . . ."¹⁴

Although both in a sense were dualistic, the CPO sharply distinguished between "red" unions, formed under C.P. auspices, and genuine independent unions which arose outside of the ranks of the mass labor organization, the A.F. of L. Although it expressed sharp opposition to the former, it was inclined to view the latter somewhat differently, because of its bona fide origin and development. The CPO offered no single method of dealing with such problems, but suggested some eight possible sets of circumstances, each of which would have to be treated differently.¹⁵ On the whole, the general tendency was to get such unions within the large mass

¹²Ibid., p. 18.

¹³Communist Party of United States (Opposition), Where We Stand, Vol. I, p.9.

¹⁴Communist Party of United States (Opposition), Where We Stand, Vol. II, p. 19. Also see Vol. IV, pp. 13, 46.

¹⁵Communist Party (Opposition), Where We Stand, Vol. IV, pp. 26-27.

organization of workers in their field.

"The chief objective of Communists and progressive unionists in dealing with these 'independent' unions is to overcome the ideological backwardness which keeps them 'independent', to deepen and broaden the solidarity and union consciousness of the workers and to effect the incorporation of the organizations into the general labor movement, into the American Federation of Labor. The situations in which 'independent' unionism usually appears are, however, so different and so various that, although the objective remains always the same, it is necessary to employ the utmost care in working out tactics to achieve this objective. The tactics employed must be based on the concrete circumstances in each case."¹⁶

The C.P.O. maintained that the attempt to arouse workers to class-consciousness and militant trade unionism could best be accomplished not by the establishment of rival unions, separated from the mass of workers, but by the creation of a left-wing bloc composed of the more advanced, politically conscious workers, under the leadership, if possible, of disciplined Communists who were guided in their day-to-day struggles by the policies outlined by the Communist party.

"The formation within the trade union of a fighting opposition movement (a left wing) directed against the anti-labor policies of the bureaucrats and fighting for militant trade unionism is the basic organizational form in which the trade union struggle of the Communists expresses itself. . . . The opposition movement within the trade unions has profound roots and a strong foundation but it can have real perspectives and a real basis for development only under the leadership of the Communists and along the line of policy outlined by the Communists. The left wing must be organized on the very broadest basis, including all workers who wish to put up a fight against the bosses and the bureaucrats on the basis of the most elementary demands.

"A strong left wing in the organized labor movement forms an indispensable prerequisite for a real campaign to organize the unorganized for which the support of the organized workers is absolutely essential. The slogan of trade union unity forms the bond between the organized and unorganized, between the left wing in the old unions and the new unions formed thru the initiative of the left wing."¹⁷

The C.P.O. further declared that, as a most effective means of strengthening the trade union movement in the United States and increasing its own

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 26.

¹⁷ Communist Party of United States (Opposition), Where We Stand, Vol. II, p. 16.

power and influence, one of the most important tasks confronting a left-wing bloc was to fight for the extension of the frontiers of unionization to the unorganized sections of the American workers whose number was legion.

"There must be a serious campaign for the organization of the unorganized. The issue must be raised in all existing unions (where it forms one of the foundations for building up the left wing). At the same time systematic efforts must be made to develop struggle among unorganized workers on the basis of which new unions may be built. Of course, this means a complete break with the present system of forming paper 'unions' by Party decree. . . ."¹⁸

Bertram Wolfe summed up the trade union policy of the Lovestone group in this manner:

"The Communist Opposition proposes that the party abandon its stupid and suicidal tactics of union-splitting and blood-letting, of deserting organizations because they are not yet militant enough. We propose to liquidate all the artificial 'revolutionary unions' that exist only on paper and that serve no real purpose except to help the reactionaries in their expulsion campaigns and to separate the Communists from the rest of the organized workers. We propose to end the situation where the Communists appear as union-splitters and restore the state of affairs in which the Communists appear as the banner-bearers of trade union and working class unity. And the Communist Opposition, beside striving to correct this false and dangerous course, shows by example in the daily struggle both to party members and the working class as a whole that the true Communist policy is not union-splitting but union organizing and rebuilding. The other path is the 'easier' but it leads away from working class and Communist progress. It leads into the blind alley of sectarianism and isolation!"¹⁹

United-Front-From-Below. The united-front-from-below tactic had its theoretical basis in the C.P. doctrine of social-fascism, the C.P.O. declared. If Social-Democrats and other self-styled Marxists who rejected the Communist line were enemies of the working class, argued the Comintern, then they must be shunned, avoided, and above all exposed before their political and trade union followings. At the same time, the effort at working class unity must not be neglected. To achieve both, the Comintern

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 19.

¹⁹ Wolfe, What is the Communist Opposition? p. 26.

worked out the united-front-from-below tactic by which attempts to achieve unity were made by direct appeals to workers in their trade unions and political organizations in defiance of and over the heads of their leaders.

The Communist Party Opposition rejected the united-front-from-below tactic; by its analysis, this tactic did not really meet the problem of united working class action; rather it was a maneuver and an invitation for non-Communists to leave their own organizations and join the Communist party.²⁰ Perhaps even more fundamental, to the extent that the orientation of the Communist party set forth that "'There can be no block with the Social Democratic workers against Fascism'", genuine working class unity even on specific issues for limited purposes was impossible.²¹

The CPO also rejected the idea that the united front tactic must serve first and foremost as a strategy to discredit other organizations and win over their membership. It was true that a correct united front policy should lead to growth, but united front activities should be undertaken with a broader outlook in mind, it argued.

" . . . Naturally, when we propose unity to the leaders of the conservative working class organizations, Socialist party or A.F. of L. unions, one of the important 'by-products' of our fight for working class unity is the exposure of the reactionary leaders. If they reject the united front proposal, they expose themselves as enemies of working class unity and united struggle. If, in response to the pressure of their followers, they accept the proposal and then do not carry on an effective fight for the program of the united front, they again expose themselves in the eyes of their followers, who can be won away to the support of the Communists as the only genuine fighters for the elementary interests of the working class. But we cannot too strongly emphasize that the Communists must not make united front proposals merely as clever maneuvers to win away workers from reactionary leadership. Such 'clever maneuvers' are seen thru by everybody. They do not promote working class unity but earn contempt for Communism as a species of sharp practices of juggling with the longing of the working class for greater unity and strength."²²

²⁰ Wolfe, op. cit., pp. 27-29.

²¹ Communist Party (Opposition), Where We Stand, Vol. IV, p. 45.

²² Wolfe, op. cit., pp. 27-28.

The correct procedure for inaugurating a united front agreement was to come to an understanding with the leadership of the organizations with whom such an agreement was to be consummated, the C.P.O. argued. When the leadership of a movement was ignored and appeals were directed to the rank-and-file membership, this was no longer a united front agreement but an invitation to leave its own organization and join the Communist party. Such a united-front-from-below approach was doomed to failure; non-Communist workers were members of their respective organizations precisely because they accepted the existing leadership and policies; they could not be won over to a Communist position merely by condemning their organizations and hurling such unsavory epithets as "social-fascists" at their leaders.

"What is this famous 'united front from below'? It is an invitation to the non-Communist workers to support the Communist Party! That is all! In short, the 'united front from below' is no united front at all. And such dishonest juggling with terms prevents any real discussion of the most complicated tactical problems confronting the party, the problems arising from entrance into united fronts with organizations under reactionary leadership."²³

In place of united-front-from-below maneuvers, the Communist Opposition advocated genuine united front agreements entered into by the leadership of working class organizations and parties, binding upon the respective members of the organizations and parties concerned, for the achievement of specific aims and objectives.²⁴

"The purpose of the proletarian united front must be the common struggle of the masses of the Social democratic and Communist workers in defense of their rights and interests against capital, against the bourgeois state and the capitalist employers.

"For the organization of this common struggle of the masses, it is necessary that the Communist and Social-democratic parties, in spite of their differences in principle, reach agreements for the execution of common actions for definite demands. These common actions must be of an extra-parliamentary character (meetings, demonstrations, strike, etc.) because

²³ Ibid., p. 28.

²⁴ Communist Party of United States (Opposition), Where We Stand, Vol. I, pp. 7-8, 22-24, 29.

only in this way can the broad masses of the workers be really mobilized and set into motion, because only in this way can real improvements in the conditions of the workers be won from capitalism. Joint parliamentary actions can only be an auxiliary to the extra-parliamentary struggle."²⁵

In its thesis of March, 1933, the objectives of the united front were thus stated by the International Communist Opposition:

"4. As the objects of various united fronts on a national and international scale, we propose:

a. Struggle against the offensive of capital, against unemployment; international coordination and support of the struggles of the workers of the individual countries against the offensive of capital.

b. International struggle against Fascism is today the most pressing task; united struggle of the German workers against the Hitler terror. International support of the Italian, German and other workers, groaning under the yoke of Fascism. Sharpest struggle against Fascist tendencies in the countries still under bourgeois democracy.

c. Struggle against imperialist war in the Far East against the danger of a new imperialist world war, for the defense of the Soviet Union. Rejection of all military credits in bourgeois states. Joint demonstrations against imperialist war preparations and war mongering. Action to prevent the export of munitions for the purpose of imperialist war.

d. International struggle against the imperialist peace treaties, against the imperialist debt agreements, for the right of self-determinism of the oppressed peoples."²⁶

In the United States, specific proposals for a united front were made to the Socialist party and the Communist party, asking for cooperation for the achievement of such aims as: the development of an anti-war, anti-fascist movement; the furtherance of progressive trade unionism; the building up of non-partisan organizations for the defense of workers; the defense of the Soviet Union; the formation of a federated Labor party based on independent working class political action.²⁷ (The Communist Party Opposition suggested the nomination of Tom Mooney for President on a United Labor Ticket in the 1936 presidential election.)²⁸

"We make this offer of cooperation to you because we are convinced

²⁵ Ibid., p. 22.

²⁶ Ibid., pp. 22-23.

²⁷ Workers Age, Dec. 1, 1934, p.3; Dec. 15, 1934; p. 1; Feb. 1, 1936, p. 5.

²⁸ Workers Age, Feb. 1, 1936, pp. 1,4.

that it would be of great benefit to the workers movement, to the furtherance of which both of our organizations are dedicated. Experience in the unemployed movement and in a number of trade unions has demonstrated the great possibilities of such cooperation. We hope that, putting to one side all factional prejudices and narrow partisan considerations, you will see your way clear to acting favorably upon our proposals, thus greatly advancing the consolidation of the forces of the class conscious proletariat in this country."²⁹

Finally, the CPO regarded the united front as a form of activity which was fruitful only with organizations having a mass following. It did not believe such activity significant where sects or splinter groups were involved.

"We must intensify our united front activities. United front actions with impotent sects (AWP, Trotskyites, etc.) are of no value, since they do not serve to set any masses in motion to struggle against employers and do not help attain revolutionary unity. Furthermore, we must be on guard against such united fronts giving the appearance of being anti-C.P. blocs. We do not and cannot have even the slightest interest in such blocs and are opposed to them. We must rather move the center of gravity of our united front actions towards mass organizations (trade unions, fraternal organizations, S.P.)."³⁰

Mechanical Transference of Tactics. The Communist Party Opposition accused the Communist International of being too heavily dominated by a tactical ideology suitable for the Soviet Union where a successful revolution had already been accomplished, but not necessarily adapted to the needs of the other sections of the Comintern carrying on a struggle against a capitalist system which had not yet been overthrown. The tactics employed by the Communist Party, U.S.S.R., whose leaders dominated the Comintern, were not criticized, and were held to be admirably suited for the Soviet Union. But their mechanical transference to Germany, the United States, and elsewhere wrought considerable damage and impeded the growth of the Communist movement, the Lovestoneites contended.

²⁹Workers Age, Dec. 1, 1934, p. 3.

³⁰Communist Party (Opposition), Where We Stand, Vol. IV, p. 15.

" . . . We hold that the interests of the victorious proletariat in Russia, led by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, do not conflict with the interests of the proletariat in the capitalist countries and with the interests of the oppressed colonial masses. We do stress that though there is a uniformity of interests there cannot be a uniformity of tactics in the two sectors of the world revolutionary movement. It is obvious that a Communist party which has already led the working class to power and victory must necessarily use different tactics from those pursued by the Communist parties which have yet to achieve this task. It is equally obvious that Communist parties which are still fighting to win a majority of the working class in their respective countries cannot use the same tactics as those pursued by a Communist party which has already led the masses to the establishment of a Proletarian Dictatorship. More than that. While the principles of Communism are international, the tactics for the achievement of these principles are conditioned in every country by the specific peculiarities and objective situations prevailing there."³¹

"The real basic source of the ultra-left course is the false transference of the methods and forms of struggle, corresponding to a country in which the working class has already triumphed and in which socialism is being built, to the Communist Parties of those countries in which the majority of the working class has still to be won and the prerequisites for taking up the struggle for power have still to be created."³²

Again, on a subsequent occasion, the National Bureau of the CPO declared:

" . . . Under the present system of political leadership in the Communist International, every important change of course in the Soviet Union is immediately transferred mechanically to the Communist parties of the capitalist countries, the objective situation or the relation of forces in these countries being entirely ignored. This method, indeed, is the deepest source of crisis that has brought the world Communist movement (outside of the Soviet Union) to the brink of ruin. The history of the C.I. for the last ten years shows that this process of mechanical transference of policy has been the moving force behind all the otherwise inexplicable turns and twists of official policy.

" . . . Because, under the present system of political leadership in the Comintern, every change of inner-Soviet policy of the C.P.S.U. is mechanically transferred and automatically reflected in a corresponding shift in the other Communist parties, we are now experiencing the marked turn away from ultra-leftism in the policies of the Communist International."³³

As an antidote for the alleged ruinous tactical policies of the Communist International, the CPO advanced (and still continues to do so) its theory of exceptionalism which it declared was Lenin's own. In a word,

³¹ Communist Party U S A (Opposition), For Unity of the World Communist Movement, pp. 8-9.

³² Communist Party of United States (Opposition), Where We Stand, Vol. I, p. 15; Wolfe, op. cit., p. 11.

³³ Communist Party (Opposition), Where We Stand, Vol. IV, p. 29.

the tactics employed by Communists in each section of the Comintern, while consistent with the fundamental principles of the C.I., must nevertheless vary with the special conditions prevailing in that section. For example, while it might be tactically correct in one country to raise the slogan, "Build Soviets", in another section such a slogan might prove inapplicable and meaningless, serving to retard rather than advance the Communist program.

"Here is how Lenin answered the abstract pedants, the 'infantile Communists' as he called them, who did not want to take into account the specific peculiarities, the concrete conditions, of each country:

"We must clearly realize that such a leading center (as the Communist International) can under no circumstances be built up after a single model, by a mechanical uniformity and levelling of the tactical rules of struggle.

"So long as national and national-state differences exist between peoples and countries (and these differences will continue to exist for a very long time, even after the realization of the proletarian dictatorship on a world scale), the unity of the international tactics of the Communist labor movement everywhere demands, not the elimination of the varied national differences -- this at the present moment is a foolish dream -- but such an application of the fundamental principles of Communism (Soviet Power and the dictatorship of the proletariat) as would permit of the proper modification of these principles in particulars and their correct adaptation and application to national and national-state differences."

"Again and again Lenin reminds us that the chief task of the scientific revolutionist or Communist in planning his strategy and tactics is:

"To investigate, study, ascertain, grasp, the nationally peculiar, nationally specific features in the concrete attempts of every country to solve the aspects of a single international problem. . ."

"In other words, slogans, solutions, proposals and tactics which are mechanically adopted for all countries at once, without regard to the peculiarities of each, are not likely to be good for any one of them."

The Lovestoneites alleged that the consequence of the policies of the Communist International were clearly apparent. Bertram Wolfe criticized the Communist Party, U.S.A. for its errors arising out of a mechanical transference of general tactics to the American soil: the slogans and tactics employed all savored of the Soviet Union, and were totally unsuited to

³⁴Communist Party, U S A (Opposition), For Unity of the World Communist Movement, pp. 8-11. Wolfe, op. cit., pp. 15-18.

³⁵Wolfe, op. cit., pp. 16-17.

the United States.

"A party that wants to sink its roots in American soil must understand American political and economic conditions. If it wants to influence and lead the American workers, it must speak their language, understand how to solve their problems, make proposals that meet their needs, embodied in slogans adjusted to their development and understanding. . . .

"The leaders of the official Communist Party of the United States have their feet in America but their heads in Europe. Their speeches deal with the problems of the Soviet workers and forget the problems of the American workers. . . . Because the Communist Party of the Soviet Union has behind it the majority of the working class, the American leaders talk and act as if our little party had the majority of the working class behind it, refuse to form united fronts with other parties (there are no other parties in the Soviet Union), denounce the millions that our party has to win, and set up artificial barriers between the Communists and the mass of the American working class. . . . The Communist Party (Opposition). . . proposes to imitate the methods of Lenin not parroting, but analysis of American realities, and the making of the Communist Party of the United States into what it was rapidly becoming before the change of line in 1929 -- an American Communist Party speaking to the American working class in its own language, of its own problems, and proposing tactics and slogans appropriate to the present relation of class forces and present political and economic realities in this country, . . ."³⁶

For a more effective Communist movement in every section of the Comintern outside of the Soviet Union, the Communist Party Opposition urged an abandonment of the mechanical technique of transplanting tactics, and the recognition, with Lenin, of the cogency of exceptionalism.³⁷ In the United States it urged a re-orientation which took cognizance of American conditions and utilized the great American revolutionary traditions.³⁸

"The Comintern, regardless of its best intentions, can only seriously jeopardize the possibility of developing effective Communist Parties in the capitalist world so long as it adheres to the impossible task of alone deciding the policies of the Communist Parties in the capitalist countries without consulting the respective parties or taking into consideration their specific conditions and needs. . . ." ³⁹

Inner-Party Organization. The difficulties arising in reference to inner-Party organization centered about two grievances alleged to exist by

³⁶Ibid., pp. 17-18.

³⁷Communist Party U S A (Opposition), Where We Stand, Vol. I, p. 10. Workers Age, Jan. 26, 1935, pp. 1-2; Feb. 2, 1935, pp. 3-4.

³⁸International Communist Opposition, "Communist Party U.S.A.--Opposition--Calls for Unity of Labor," The Road to Communism (Spring, 1935), Vol. II: No. 2, p. 42.

³⁹Lovestone, People's Front Illusion, p. 84.

the International Communist Opposition: the domination of the Communist International by the Soviet Union delegation; the absence of democratic control and genuine party democracy within the organization of the Communist International as well as in its various sections.

The Domination of the Comintern by the C.P.S.U. The Lovestoneites held that one of the chief causes of the false tactical position of the Communist International was the latter's domination by the Communist party of the Soviet Union. The problems of the world proletariat were seen not through the eyes of Communist leaders of sections which had yet to accomplish their revolution but through those who had already achieved the dictatorship of the proletariat. This inevitable difference in perspective and viewpoint showed itself in the policies proposed for the Communist International, the C.P.O. stated.

"The real basic source of the ultra-left course is seen by the I.C.O. in the false transference of the methods and forms of struggle. . .

"The basis of all this is the monopoly of leadership of the C.P.S.U. in the Comintern. Until Lenin's death, this was still a positive factor; it has now, however, become outlived because the gap between the tasks of the C.P.S.U. (the tasks of socialist construction) and the tasks of the other sections of the Comintern (the tasks of the preparation and the carrying thru of the struggle for power), has been continually growing, especially in recent years in view of much greater tempo of Socialist construction in the U.S.S.R. as compared with the advance of the revolution in capitalist countries. For these reasons the monopoly of leadership must be abolished and there must be created a collective leadership for the Communist International which will direct the forces of the revolution of the whole world (the victorious workers of the Soviet Union and the still oppressed workers of the rest of the world) according to uniform fundamentals but with consideration for the special conditions of their activity."⁴⁰

" . . . The application of communist principles outside the S.U. does not rank as high as the application within the S.U. The Communist Party of the S.U., however, is today not only the leading but the sole determining party of the C.I. In this latter function lies the harm. The CP of S.U. does not suffice for the general task of leading the struggle for the victory of the proletarian revolution all over the world. As a matter of fact, no single communist party could be adequate for this enor-

⁴⁰ Communist Party of United States (Opposition), Where We Stand, Vol. I, pp. 15-16.

mous task. It is now a matter of bringing the communist parties of the countries outside the S.U. up to the level of their historical tasks. They must be made mature.

"The chief point, now, is to replace the leadership monopoly of the CP of the S.U., which has become an obstacle to its development, by a collective, international leadership of the communist world movement, not less united or less firm, but more correct and more effective. . . . The false tactics of the CI outside the S.U. have undergone decisive criticisms especially through the German events, and were refuted by the facts."⁴¹

The solution of the I.C.O. consisted in the restoration to the non-Russian sections of the Comintern their proper share of power and influence in the formulation of all policies. The International Communist Opposition therefore demanded:

"A new relationship in the C.I., whereby the C.P.S.U. will be the leading Party, the first among equals, in the Comintern, and not the sole dominating force. The C.I. must have a genuinely collective international leadership."⁴²

"The replacement of the actual monopoly of the CPSU of the Comintern by a real collective and at the same time, united and centralized leadership based upon the Party representatives who are in the position to pass upon their own judgment upon the class relations in their own countries and who are not merely officials of the international leadership but actually trusted representatives of their sections."⁴³

Absence of Democratic Centralism and Party Democracy. In order to obtain a smoothly-functioning, efficient organization, which at the same time is not tyrannical and arbitrary, it is necessary to reconcile two forces which often seem to be at variance with each other: democracy and discipline. One demands freedom, the other unquestioned obedience. Lenin solved the problem by the principle of "democratic centralism" which in substance held that all decisions must be arrived at as the result of a thoroughgoing discussion in all sections of the party, from top to bottom; after a decision had been voted, it was binding upon all members of the Communist International, who were in duty bound to carry it out.

⁴¹"The International Communist Opposition," The Road to Communism (May-July, 1934), Vol. I, No. 1, p. 4.

⁴²Communist Party of United States (Opposition), Where We Stand, Vol. II, p. 36.

⁴³Ibid., Vol. I, p. 10.

It is this principle of "democratic centralism" which the International Communist Opposition alleged had been flagrantly violated; that decisions were not democratically arrived at after extended rank-and-file discussions, but were arbitrarily handed down by a small group dominated by the Russian section which often had a distorted perspective of the problem it purported to solve; that a democratically-organized Communist International could never have been persuaded to accept the antics of the so-called "Third Period".⁴⁴

" . . . The organizational foundation of the Communist International as well as of its sections is democratic centralism. Revolutionary discipline, based upon democratic centralism, is the indispensable binding force of the Communist International, and Parties.

"Democratic centralism means:

1. That the decisions be arrived at on the basis of the discussions and the participation of the Party membership. The discussion must, of course, take place within the bounds of Communist fundamentals.
2. That the functionaries of the Party be elected by the membership and can be removed by the membership at any time in the proper manner.
3. That the decisions arrived at by the Party Committees in such a manner are unconditionally binding upon the membership.
4. That during any action, discussion as to the necessity of the action (but not as to the manner of carrying it thru) cannot take place.
5. That after its conclusion every action is subject to discussion and examination by the membership.

Revolutionary discipline must serve the carrying out of a correct Communist policy. But if discipline stands in the service of a false policy, then it becomes more grotesque foolishness (Lenin). Whereas, with a correct Communist policy, the formation of factions and tendencies is impermissible in a Communist party, yet when the attempt is made to put thru a wrong policy by disciplinary measures, the formation of factions becomes a revolutionary duty. Discipline within a Communist fraction or tendency must be even stricter than within a Communist Party."⁴⁵

"Our concrete conception of inner-Party democracy is exactly the same as that contained in the draft resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Austria to the Party convention. It follows:

"The Party must be built on the principle of democratic centralism, on the basis of inner-Party democracy and strict centralized leadership and self-imposed iron discipline. Inner-Party democracy means that no Party member can adopt a passive attitude in the Party but must be actively engaged in carrying out the work assigned to him by his unit. Furthermore, he must report his experiences and opinions to the Party and must actively participate in the working out of tactics and the Party line. Inner-Party

⁴⁴Communist Party U S A (Opposition), For Unity of the World Communist Movement, p. 5. Wolfe, op. cit., pp. 31-34.

⁴⁵Communist Party of United States (Opposition), Where We Stand, Vol. I, p. 3.

democracy means self-criticism, i.e., an unceasing, vital testing of the correctness of the Party line, a ruthless exposition of the weaknesses and inadequacies of each and every Party organ, a systematic check up on adopted resolutions. Inner-Party democracy assures each Party member a great deal of initiative in the application of general Party directives and enables him to respond to specific situations. Inner-Party democracy means finally the most active participation of the entire membership in the selection and building up of leading Party cadres and providing for the demotion of those who have shown themselves to be incapable and their substitution by more capable comrades."⁴⁶

The Communist Party Opposition therefore asked for a restoration of normal party democracy, as understood by and practised during the days of Lenin, as a condition precedent to all efforts at re-unification of the Communist International.

" . . . Thru party democracy it becomes possible for differing viewpoints, within the limits of communist fundamentals, of course, to exist and express themselves fully within the party, without impairing the discipline or weakening its fighting power. Party democracy means that a minority has the right to express its viewpoint within the limits of communist fundamentals but that the decisions of the majority are to be carried out by the entire membership regardless of differences of opinion. We don't ask for any special privileges. We are prepared to dissolve our organization when unity is established on the basis of inner-party democracy on the lines herewith indicated. Inner-party democracy for all members is for us sufficient for disciplined cooperation in the CI and its section."⁴⁷

Criticism of the Communist Party, Soviet Union -- 1929-1935

On the whole, the International Communist Opposition gave wholehearted approval of the economic and foreign policies of the Soviet Union: the Five-year plan, the Soviet foreign policy, and the rejection of "Trotskyism" of which it was an ardent foe.

The International Communist Opposition insisted that its support of these policies came from careful analysis and evaluation, and not as the result of blind adulation.

⁴⁶ Committee, National/ Communist Party Opposition of Germany, "What We are Ready to Do for Unity," The Road to Communism (January, 1935), Vol. II, No. 1, p.7. Also see pp. 5, 24.

⁴⁷ International Communist Opposition, "The Need for Communist Unity," The International Class Struggle (Summer, 1936), Vol. I, No. 1, p. 40. Also see p. 32.

" . . . It so happens that we are in agreement with the general line of the Communist party of the Soviet Union in socialist construction but we have arrived at this agreement not thru formal approval or fear of touching the question because it is of the 'sacred province' of Russian communists. Rather, our conclusions are based upon a critical examination of Russian conditions and tasks today."¹

Soviet Foreign Policy. The International Communist Opposition defended and gave its general approval to the foreign policies of the Soviet Union as outlined by Stalin and his associates. The main points of its position were the following:² (1) The Communist International and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union are two separate and distinct entities; correct policies for the former are not necessarily correct for the latter. (2) In order to maintain its existence while building socialism, it is both necessary and theoretically sound for the Communist party of the Soviet Union to make treaties with capitalist countries and collaborate with the League of Nations. In such acts there is nothing at variance with the interests of the international proletariat. At the same time, the Soviet Union must disclaim all responsibility for the acts of the Communist International and its local sections in other countries. (3) Regardless of Soviet foreign diplomacy, the Communist International must fight for its Marxist-Leninist program. The C.I. must not tie the hands of its local sections to forestall any allegations of bad faith made by capitalist powers to the Soviet Union because of the activities of the Communist International.

In the matter of the relation of the Communist International to the Soviet Union, Lovestone emphatically pointed out the difference indicated above:

" . . . The successes and achievements of the U.S.S.R., whether on the economic field or in international politics, can under no circumstances replace the revolutionary struggle in the other countries. A correct foreign

¹Communist Party U S A (Opposition), For Unity of the World Communist Movement, p. 9.

²Lovestone, Soviet Foreign Policy and the World Revolution, passim.

policy pursued by the Soviet government, led by the C.P.S.U., can never be a substitute for correct tactics by the Comintern or any of its sections in capitalist countries. It is entirely possible that, at a particular moment, the Comintern, as a whole may have false tactics, while the tactics laid down by the C.P.S.U. for the Soviet government in its relation with capitalist powers may be sound.

" . . . Right in the Soviet Union does not necessarily mean correct in other sections of the Comintern; vice versa, wrong tactics in the other sections of the Comintern, do not necessarily mean wrong policies by the C.P.S.U. Nor must anyone attempt to hide or minimize the falsity of the line of the Communist International at a particular moment behind the soundness and achievements of Soviet foreign policy."³

Critics of the foreign policy of the Soviet Union did not seem to be fully aware, ran the argument of the Lovestone-Brandler group, of the international set-up under which the Soviet Union had to develop and function; a socialist system not yet entirely self-sufficient attempting to carry on while surrounded by bitter, implacable foes seeking its destruction. Soviet diplomacy was therefore correct in endeavoring to use the capitalist powers for Communist ends: utilize their differences, political alignments, military strength, etc., on behalf of rather than against the Soviet Union. To accomplish these ends, treaties with capitalist powers had to be negotiated, alliances had to be concluded, and participation in the League of Nations was justifiable.

"We must, therefore, recognize that the USSR is compelled to find some modus vivendi with the imperialist and capitalist powers. This modus vivendi is expressed in certain compromises by the Soviet government, by the Russian proletariat already in power, in certain economic relations, pacts, treaties and diplomacy resorted to by the USSR. The same would hold for the CP in the U.S. if it were today a party in power and in the international position in which the USSR now finds itself."⁴

"Soviet foreign policy rests, in a measure, on a constantly changing balance of power and relations between various capitalist countries. The Soviet Government is prepared to sign non-aggression pacts, or mutual assistance pacts, with any imperialist power, let us say for ten years, although while signing it, the proletarian government knows very well that these pacts may last only ten months or ten weeks. Never do Soviet diplomats harbor any illusions as to the calendar life of such signed documents.

³Ibid., p. 28.

⁴Ibid., p. 26.

Never does the Soviet Government, in signing such treaties, enter into an agreement in defense of one imperialist power against another. Always such non-aggression treaties are offered by the Soviet to all imperialist powers regardless of the conflicts among themselves. What the Soviet government is trying to get out of every imperialist power is the most effective pledge and guarantee against attack -- no matter how little value such guarantees may have. . . ."⁵

"To conclude, the foreign policy of the Soviet Union is primarily a weapon of the Russian section of the international proletariat in the world struggle against imperialism. It is a weapon different from the weapons used by the workers of other countries because the Russian proletariat has already attained a higher degree of class consciousness, has already won power. In the use of this weapon the Communist Party of the Soviet Union must take into consideration the actual class relationships prevailing inside the leading imperialist countries, the differences amongst the imperialist powers, the strength of the international labor movement and the economic and military forces at its own command. This is the only sound, practical revolutionary approach. Abstractions without foundation in fact, shibboleths as a substitute for reality, must be discarded."⁶

" . . . Soviet foreign policy has successfully maintained initiative and complete freedom of action through its consistent refusal to support any imperialist forces or objectives and through its being ever ready to support even the faintest effort towards the protraction of peace, regardless of its source. As it should be, in these Soviet maneuvers and relationships for peace, the exact form of capitalist class rule, the difference in state form in the various countries (Fascist, monarchist, bourgeois democracy), does not play any decisive role. There is not the slightest conflict of interest between Soviet foreign policy and the international proletariat. . . ."⁷

" . . . The momentary attitude of the Soviet Union towards any bourgeois power, group of powers, or League of Nations does not mean that it has any illusions about them, that it indorses their colonial or mandated-area policies or their armament programs. This position of the U.S.S.R. simply means that it is prepared to work together with any and all forces, regardless of how temporary and skin-deep their desires to prevent an outbreak of imperialist war may be, for the preservation of peace, even for the briefest period. . . ."⁸

In justifying the Soviet foreign policy and diplomacy, the International Communist Opposition clearly indicated where the line regarding

⁵Ibid., p. 6.

⁶Ibid., pp. 30-31.

⁷Workers Age, July 15, 1934, p. 4.

⁸Idem.

pacts and treaties should be drawn. In no case was it permissible for the Soviet Union to give precedence to its treaties and security pacts over the fundamental right of workers in the capitalist countries to make the outbreak of hostilities the occasion to turn an imperialist war into a civil war for the overthrow of its capitalist government; further, even before such an outbreak, the Communist Parties in these capitalist countries were not to be required to pledge their support to any treaties concluded with the Soviet Union which would abjure their right of revolution.

The National Bureau of the Communist Party Opposition of the United States expressed its position very clearly on this issue:

"The basic Communist slogan of transforming the imperialist war into a civil war remains unchanged but assumes a new, concrete form for Communist parties in countries having an alliance with the Soviet Union. These Communist Parties steadfastly continue to aim at the revolutionary overthrow of their own bourgeois state by the proletariat. . . .

"Under no circumstances can a military alliance between a capitalist country and the Soviet Union mean that the Communist Party in the bourgeois country is to conclude peace with the capitalist class when the war breaks out. . . . Talk of peace with the bourgeoisie or voting for war credits is out of the question, is utterly impermissible for Communists in such countries as well as for the Communists of other lands. Such a policy would be open social-chauvinism no matter under what banner it would be conducted."⁹

Lovestone was especially critical of the Communist parties of France and Czechoslovakia in the period immediately preceding the Seventh World Congress for giving their wholehearted approval and endorsement to the pacts concluded by their capitalist governments with the Soviet Union; in both countries the C.P. pledged unqualified support to their governments in the event of a war involving the Soviet Union against a common foe.¹⁰ He characterized such a policy as a serious departure from the principles of Lenin and "dangerous manifestations of social chauvinism in the ranks of

⁹Lovestone, op. cit., p. 23. Also Workers Age, July 13, 1935, p. 3.

¹⁰Lovestone, op. cit., pp. 20-22.

the French and Czech Communist Parties".¹¹

Soviet Economy. The Lovestone-Brandler group inclined to the position that, carping criticism aside, "The general line of the C.P.S.U. for Socialist construction in the U.S.S.R. is correct."¹² Its general attitude was one of critical approval.¹³ Lovestone declared:

"The general line of economic policy pursued by the C.P.S.U. is not new. It is a policy long ago sketched for the Bolshevik party by its leader, Lenin. Stalin is neither to be condemned nor commended for it. At best, his contribution is firm adherence to this line coupled with a vigorous hand in its execution. . . ."¹⁴

Unlike the Trotskyists who found serious deficiencies in the First and Second Five-Year Plans, the International Communist Opposition noted little to criticize.

"We regard the Five-Year Plan as the most effective program for hastening the completion of another stage in the development of Socialist construction in the U.S.S.R. -- the extension of the Socialist revolution to the agricultural front (collectivization) and the rapid development of heavy industries (industrialization)."¹⁵

A footnote of caution was added, however. The success of the Five-Year Plans depended on unity, democracy, and Leninist self-criticism within the party. Above all, there must be, "A merciless struggle against bureaucratism no matter where it manifests itself -- even if it be in the highest committees of the Party or Soviet apparatus."¹⁶

Criticism of Communist Party, U.S.A. -- 1929-1935

Since every section of the Communist International is duty bound to carry out the fundamental line laid down by each succeeding Congress of the Comintern, a general familiarity with the criticism of the policies of the

¹¹Ibid., p. 21.

¹²Communist Party of United States (Opposition), Where We Stand, Vol. II, p. 35.

¹³Ibid., pp. 32-35.

¹⁴Lovestone, op. cit., p. 16.

¹⁵Communist Party of United States (Opposition), Where We Stand, Vol. II, p. 33.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 34.

Sixth World Congress of the Communist International (1935), made by the International Communist Opposition gives a clue to the objections raised against the C.P., U.S.A. It is unnecessary to give full details of the specific objections raised against the manner of carrying out of the general C.P. line: dual unionism, social fascism, united-front-from-below tactics.¹ Likewise, the objections to the C.P.'s alleged sectarianism and failure to recognize what was Lenin's theory of exceptionalism have also been noted already.²

Although perhaps not as important as the more fundamental criticisms made, it is nevertheless significant to note the objections raised to the Communist party's solution of the Negro question and the problem of organizing a Labor party in the United States.

The Negro Question. The Lovestone group flatly rejected this fundamental analysis of the Negro question as made by the Communist party: the Negro is an oppressed worker with a distinct culture; that he can be won over to the Communist position by promising him "self-determinism in the Black Belt"; that such a slogan will help him realize his nationalist yearnings and aspirations for an independent Black America in the South.³

"The negro people in the United States do not constitute a colonial people under the heel of American imperialism. All of the essential characteristics of a colony (geographical separation from metropolis, the distinctness of the national economy of the colony and its specific relation to the imperialist economy of the metropolis, etc.) are absent. But just as little do the Negro people constitute a national minority in the real sense of the term. For the formation of a nation there is necessary a community (and distinctness) of language, of territory, of economic life (a national

¹Workers Age, July 15, 1934, pp. 4-6; Jan. 10, 1935, p. 3; Feb. 9, 1935, pp. 3-4.

²Discussed supra.

³"Marxism and the 'Negro Question'", The Road to Communism (Spring, 1935), Vol. II, No. 2, pp. 1-7.

economy), of psychic structure (culture) and tradition. Not a single one of these conditions is characteristic of the Negroes in the United States. The attempt to supply the necessary community of territory by the creation of a fictitious 'Negroland' (the 'Black Belt') runs contrary to every fact of American history and to every conception of contemporaneous tendencies and movements among the Negro people. . . ."⁴

" . . . The ideas of racial solidarity, strong amongst the Negro masses, which must be turned by Communists into ideas of solidarity of the oppressed Negro and white masses against the common enemy is being dissipated into 'self-isolationist' channels by Negro reformists. In this connection the 'separatist' tendencies inherent in the official party theory of 'self-determination' can only tend to strengthen these tendencies and plays into the hands of the reactionaries inside and outside of the ranks of the Negroes. The C.P.O. must therefore all the more present a clear Communist line on the Negro Question in the U.S. The Communists must demand the complete social and political equality of the Negro race. They must break down the barriers between the Negro and white worker and weld them into a common front against the common enemy. They must champion the abolition of peonage and the serf-conditions of the farmers of the South. They must fight for the complete equality of the Negro in industry and the smashing of the barriers against the Negro workers in the trade unions. They must take up the struggle against lynching, Jim-Crowism, and every type of discrimination. Only in this way can the Negro masses be won for revolutionary action."⁵

"The solution of the Negro question has been buried by the CP in the mechanically transplanted bog of 'Self-Determination for the Black Belt'. We have avoided this morass, and instead have examined objectively the roots of race prejudice and persecution in the United States, and resorted to a program of practical activity for overcoming this most dangerous obstacle to working-class victory."⁶

The Labor Party. The Communist Party Opposition rejected as false and misleading the analysis of Earl Browder in which the latter took the CPO to task for supporting a Labor party similar to that supported by the C.P. in 1928.⁷ Under the C.P. line adopted in 1929, this conception of a labor party was held to be one of the great bulwarks of capitalism, and consequently, a manifestation of social fascism.⁸ The Communist Party Op-

⁴Ibid., pp. 1-2.

⁵Workers Age, July 15, 1934, p. 6.

⁶Workers Age, Nov. 1, 1934, p. 3.

⁷For an early statement of Lovestone on the Labor party issue see Lovestone, The Presidential Election and the Workers, pp. 39-44, written in 1928, while he was still General Secretary of the Communist party.

⁸Earl Browder, "Report for the Political Buro to the Extraordinary Party Conference, New York City, July 7, 1933," The Communist (Aug. 1933), Vol. XII, No. 8. Quoted in Workers Age, April 27, 1935, p. 2.

position took the position that the approach to the American workers which was likely to bring the best results would have to be made through the channels of an American Labor party based on the trade union movement. In no other way was it likely that the great masses could be stirred from their indifference, ignorance or lethargy and won over to a position of revolutionary Marxism in the course of time.⁹ The Lovestoneites maintained that the great mounting unrest among the working class, its widespread strikes, its growing militancy -- all would have to be diverted into effective channels for the development of class-consciousness and independent political action. However deplorable, the efforts of the Communist and Socialist parties to accomplish this on the basis of a direct Marxian or diluted Marxian approach had failed abysmally.¹⁰ The Labor party therefore offered the most workable solution of the problem.

"The Communist Party (Opposition) should, thru propaganda, agitation and thru its influence in the trade unions, do everything in its power to stimulate and hasten the historical process of a Labor Party development in the United States. In our doing this, we are hastening the transformation of the workers from pawns of the two big bourgeois political parties into conscious forces moving and fighting in their own behalf."¹¹

The C.P.O. offered many reasons to explain why the Labor Party had not yet developed in the United States: the pitting of native and foreign workers against each other by the capitalist class; the ability of the native worker to secure skilled work at comparatively good wages, leaving the low-paid, unskilled jobs for foreigners; the great opportunities for climbing from one's proletarian origin into the capitalist class; the adamant opposition of the A.F.L. trade union bureaucracy to independent politi-

⁹ Communist Party (Opposition), Why a Labor Party? pp. 3-15. International Communist Opposition, "For a Labor Party in the United States," The Road to Communism (Jan. 1935), Vol. II, No. 1, pp. 26-34.

¹⁰ Communist Party (Opposition), Why a Labor Party? pp. 5-8.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 16.

cal action.¹² But continued unemployment on a nationwide scale among the skilled workers as well as unskilled, the decline in the per centage of foreign-born workers due to immigration restrictions, the rising threat of fascism, unfavorable Supreme Court decisions, and many other factors -- all contributed towards the amenability of the American worker to the idea of a Labor party, the Lovestoneites averred.¹³

The CPO admitted that the fight to establish a genuine workers party would encounter many difficulties. It agreed that " . . . a Labor party would, at the outset, have a confused program, lacking clarity in its policies, inadequate from the proletarian revolutionary viewpoint, . . . " But it maintained that these beginnings had to be made.

The Communist Party Opposition declared that its own functions within a Labor party would be extremely important and significant. It would secure workers to join the party; help in the formulation and adoption of correct principles; carry on a struggle for the realization of such basic, immediate needs of workers as unemployment, old age, and health insurance; attempt to win over the more advanced members to a complete Marxist-Leninist program and membership in the Communist Party Opposition.¹⁴

"The Communists, as the vanguard of the proletariat, must not only be able to point out clearly the objective basis of this trend towards a Labor Party in the United States. We must also be able to stimulate this historically progressive trend in a country which has relatively the most politically backward working class in the world."¹⁵

"Our agitation for a Labor Party is not something abstract based merely on our analysis, but is to be tied up with the every day immediate interests of the workers, particularly the burning need for social insurance, the right to organize, the menace of Company unions, etc. It is on this basis that the Labor Party movement will serve as a most effective weapon for

¹²Ibid., pp. 11-12.

¹³Ibid., pp. 12-14.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 14-16.

¹⁵Idem.

breaking down the prejudices against independent working class political action among the working masses thru generations by the capitalists . .
.. "16

"Thru our model constructive activity among the labor party organization and members, we Communists should be able not only to draw the more militant and advanced workers into our ranks but should also be able to help move the whole organization leftward. . . "17

"We should not connect the Labor Party with any aims achievable only by a Communist Party; such as the Proletarian Dictatorship, Soviet Power, etc. At the same time we must conduct, constructively, campaigns inside the Labor Party for more leftward demands, attuned, of course, to the need of maintaining the broadest organizational base for the Labor Party. .
.. "18

For the 1936 presidential campaign, the CPO proposed a united labor ticket with Tom Mooney as standard-bearer.¹⁹ But neither the Socialist nor the Communist party acted favorably upon this suggestion.

¹⁶Idem.

¹⁷Idem.

¹⁸Idem.

¹⁹The 1936 Election Campaign and the Position of the Communist Party U.S.A. (Opposition), p. 3.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE COMMUNIST PARTY (OPPOSITION) - INDEPENDENT LABOR LEAGUE OF AMERICA -- CRITICISM OF OFFICIAL COMMUNIST MOVEMENT (SINCE 1935)

Criticism of the Communist International -- Since 1935

The general criticism made by the C.P.O. of the present line of the C.I., laid down by the Seventh World Congress in 1935 has been that in retracing its steps away from its former orientation of "ultra-left un-realism and adventurism", it has fallen into the deeper pitfalls of "ultra right opportunism".¹ Its former sectarianism, as evidenced by its doctrines of dual unionism, social fascism and united-front-from-below (which in effect was a united front with nobody), has been abandoned in favor of the People's Front, in essence a united front with everybody. In the United States, the Lovestoneites have alleged, the intense antagonism and opposition of the C.P. to the C.P.O.'s proposal for a Labor party has given way to the demand for an amorphous Farmer-Labor party, intended to include everybody, class conscious or not, professing or not professing an acceptance of the class struggle. In one notable respect the Seventh Congress followed the procedure of the Sixth, the Lovestoneites have contended: the change in position was not democratically arrived at; the membership was not consulted; the change in line was as much a surprise to C.P. members as to outsiders.²

Criticism of People's Front.³ The C.P.O. (and its successor, the I.L.L.A.)

¹Workers Age, Jan. 25, 1936, p. 3; Lovestone, People's Front Illusion, pp. 6-9.

²Workers Age, March 14, 1936, p. 4.

³Lovestone, op. cit., passim. Workers Age, April 16, 1938, pp. 3, 5; April 23, 1938, pp. 3, 5.

has maintained that the People's Front is a fundamental departure from the principles of Marx and Engels,⁴ and Lenin;⁵ that the attempt to separate capitalist countries into good ones ("democracies") and bad ones ("fascists") is totally unsound; that the restatement of the basic issue as "democracy versus fascism" is incorrect; the real struggle still remains the workers struggle to overthrow capitalism and establish socialism.⁶

Despite its many errors from 1929 to 1935, the Communist International did not make this basic confusion which today underlies its orientation, the Independent Labor League of America has asserted:

"In the days before the Seventh World Congress, Marxists, communists, never spoke of democracy in the abstract. They always realized that there is no such thing as pure democracy in a society divided into classes. Today, the official communists seem to have forgotten, or at least act as if they had never learned, that modern history knows two kinds of democracy: the capitalist democracy of the type we have in the U.S.A., Great Britain and France, and the proletarian democracy of the type we have in the Soviet Union. Furthermore, it had always been the contention of all communists -- those in the Comintern as well as those in the International Communist Opposition -- that, as the class struggle sharpens, the mask of bourgeois democracy is discarded and reveals capitalist dictatorship in its open ugly, brutal form -- fascism. Until recently, the official communists went along with us in pointing out the organic connection between the capitalist dictatorship known as 'democracy' and the capitalist dictatorship known as 'fascism'. Time and again Earl Browder himself pointed out how false it is to conclude that 'fascism is the opposite of capitalist democracy' or that 'this democracy is the means of combatting and deflating fascism'. On countless occasions the party members were taught that it is impermissible to counterpose 'democracy against dictatorship' and that 'capitalist democracy is not the enemy but the mother of fascism, that it is not the destroyer but the creator of fascism' and that, while it is true that 'fascism destroys democracy', it is criminal 'to propagate the falsehood that democracy will destroy fascism'."⁷

"When we speak of communism and socialism on the one hand and capitalism on the other we are speaking of and comparing or contrasting social systems. When we speak of democracy we do not speak of it in the abstract. It is either capitalist democracy or working class democracy. When we speak of capitalist democracy and compare it with fascism we are not comparing social systems but types of dictatorships, forms of state, utilized by

⁴Lovestone, op. cit., pp. 10-11. Workers Age, Aug. 29, 1936, p. 2.

⁵Workers Age, Jan. 25, 1936, p. 3.

⁶Lovestone, op. cit., pp. 3-5.

⁷Ibid., pp. 5-6.

entire ruling classes to maintain their power, to help continue a certain type of social system. . . ."⁸

In essence the People's Front has been called another name for what the Comintern rightly and emphatically rejected in the past: class collaboration.⁹

" . . . The People's Front is class collaboration under a new name. It is the pre-war 'cabinet-socialism' rebaptized; it is the old game of coalition with the bourgeoisie dressed up in a new uniform."¹⁰

The People's Front, which contrasts sharply with the united front, cannot therefore be a working class tactic, the Lovestoneites have held, because it permits joint action with certain sections of the bourgeoisie.¹¹ Lovestone has thus drawn the line between the two:

"Our attitude towards a united front working class government is based on its being an experiment necessary for eliminating the very last remnants of bourgeois democratic illusions among the workers. With the People's Front government strategy, the objective is the very opposite -- to prolong and preserve the decaying bourgeois democratic system, parliamentary capitalist democracy and all the illusions the workers may entertain.

"We can properly support a united front working class government under the condition that it grant us full freedom of action to prepare for the struggle for power and communism. With the People's Front government, however, we face a totally different situation. Here the bourgeoisie allows us to go into partnership with it and to support its 'mild' government on the condition that the workers do not fight even for their immediate demands, that they give up the weapon of sit-down strikes and occupation of the factories, drop all extra-parliamentary actions and pledge loyalty to bourgeois law and order. . . .

"In a proletarian united front government all bourgeois parties are excluded, but in a People's Front government spokesmen of the bourgeois are not only included but have the final veto power. Carried to its logical conclusion, a People's Front government leads to a national front government -- a French Front as proposed by the French C.P."¹²

Likewise, in answer to its critics who have not seen any difference

⁸Ibid., pp. 19-20.

⁹Workers Age, April 25, 1936, p. 6.

¹⁰Lovestone, op. cit., p. 13.

¹¹Workers Age, Jan. 11, 1936, pp. 1,3.

¹²Lovestone, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

between the People's Front and the Labor Party, the CPO has declared:

"What, then, has the Labor party to do with the People's Front? The two stand in diametrical opposition to each other. The fundamental meaning of the Labor party is the class separation of the proletariat from the bourgeoisie and its parties; the fundamental meaning of the People's Front is the class collaboration of the proletariat with the bourgeoisie thru its democratic parties. The significant outcome of the Labor party is the initiation of the process of political class emancipation of the proletariat from bourgeois influence; the significant outcome of the People's Front is the political subordination of the proletariat to the so-called democratic sections of the bourgeoisie. A wider disparity in every important respect could hardly be imagined!"¹³

The I.L.L.A. has admitted that criticism of the People's Front does not thereby imply that collaboration with the bourgeoisie is never permissible; but such collaboration must never advance the fortunes of capitalism at the expense of the working class.

"Marxists are for collaboration with the petty bourgeoisie under certain conditions -- so long as they are prepared to fight side by side with the proletariat against the big bourgeoisie, against monopoly capital. But this does not mean that we must line up with the small or bigger bourgeoisie for the purpose of defending and perpetuating capitalism as a social system. . . ." ¹⁴

Lovestone has given his party's refutation of the position taken by the C.P. that the People's Front is the only alternative to fascism. He has maintained that the difference between capitalist democracy and fascism is one of degree rather than kind; that fascism is the stage to which democratic capitalism reluctantly graduates in order to maintain the profit system in the face of adverse conditions and circumstances. In the last analysis, he has said, workers must place their reliance upon their own strength and upon independent working class action; their disastrous experiences in the past should teach them to be wary of their traditional
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enemies.

¹³ Workers Age, Jan. 25, 1936, p. 1.

¹⁴ Lovestone, op. cit., p. 11.

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 23-25.

" . . . To go into partnership with one section of the enemy class in order to hold back 'a more reactionary' section of the same class, must inevitably devitalize the working class struggle and, therefore, invite constant encroachments by the bourgeoisie as a whole."¹⁶

It is an implicit contention of the Lovestoneites that even the Communists themselves have recognized that the new line is a departure from Marxist-Leninist fundamentals. Otherwise they would not find it necessary to purge footnotes found in the earlier editions of Lenin's writings when republishing them.¹⁷

Collective Security, War and Sanctions. Up until 1935, the International Communist Opposition defended the position taken by the Comintern on its relation to the Soviet Union. It argued, as has already been indicated, that the Communist International and the Soviet Union were two separate entities; that while the former waged war against capitalism, and prepared for the coming struggle for power, the Soviet Union could carry on its policy of entering into security pacts and collaborating with the League of Nations in order to prolong peace by pitting its enemies against each other. But, warned the Lovestone-Brandler group, at no time would it be permissible for the international class struggle and the policies of the C.I. to become subservient to the foreign policy of the Soviet Union.¹⁸

Yet, it has alleged, the very thing which the International Communist Opposition warned against has happened. The People's Front policies have placed the Soviet Union above the Communist International. In its endeavor to preserve the Soviet Union the C.I. has pursued policies which have not only spelled the doom of world revolution, but also have placed the Soviet Union itself in serious jeopardy. The latter's collective security pacts

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 24-25.

¹⁷ Workers Age, June 18, 1938, p. 6.

¹⁸ Lovestone, Soviet Foreign Policy and the World Revolution, passim.

have not remained mere military alliances but have become political instruments for binding all sections of the Comintern to the support of their imperialist governments in a war against the enemies of the U.S.S.R.¹⁹ The essentially sound Marxian position of turning an imperialist war into a civil war and of spreading revolutionary defeatism, which the Lovestoneites have advocated, has been abandoned.²⁰

"The most important tenet of Marxism-Leninism is the theory of the class struggle. Applied to the war question, this means that in times of war the revolutionary class struggle is the guiding principle of the Socialist and Communist Parties to which the minutest detail of their activities is entirely subordinated, and, furthermore, that in an imperialist war the revolutionary class struggle must be orientated towards the overthrow of capitalist rule thru civil war.

"The C.I., however, abandons this fundamental of Marxism-Leninism when it instructs the Communist Parties of imperialist countries to defend the bourgeois republic in case of an attack by a fascist state and to form 'People's Front governments', where there is an immediate danger of war. A 'People's Front government' entails the closest collaboration of the Communist Party with Social Democratic and bourgeois parties in time of war. The People's Front policy is worse than the policy of class peace as pursued by labor during the world war, because then labor merely pledged not to fight against the bourgeois government. The People's Front, however, means the closest collaboration with the bourgeois class in power. And it follows logically that the C.P. confines itself exclusively to demands for democratic reform of the bourgeoisie army and drops its revolutionary demand for replacing the bourgeois army with the red army of workers and peasants. Anxious to defend the bourgeois republic, the C.P. cannot touch its mightiest weapon -- the bourgeois army; moreover, the defense of the republic in war leads to the acceptance of the patriotic jingoism that accompanies national defense.

"The question immediately presents itself: what has caused the C.I. to make such a fundamental turn?

"The purpose of the change is obviously that of mastering a maximum array of forces, in the face of the war danger that threatens the Soviet Union particularly from Hitler Germany and Japanese imperialism, in order to delay as long as possible and to support the Soviet Union in case of war. Every delay means a period of growth of the military, economic and political prowess of the Soviet Union.

"The aim is a correct one, the methods applied toward its realization, however, are impermissible from a Communist viewpoint; far from fulfilling their purpose, they run counter to it."²¹

¹⁹ Workers Age, Sept. 12, 1936, pp. 1,3; Oct. 17, 1936, p. 4; March 13, 1937, p. 5; Feb. 5, 1938, p. 4.

²⁰ Workers Age, Dec. 5, 1937, p. 3; Dec. 11, 1937, pp. 3,4; March 12, 1938, pp. 4,6. For a statement of the C.P.O.'s position on war, see "Communism and War," The International Class Struggle (Winter, 1936), Vol. I, No. 2, pp. 92-99.

²¹ Workers Age, Oct. 17, 1936, p. 4.

" . . . The strongest deterrent to war that the bourgeois classes and governments face ever since the existence of a revolutionary labor movement is their fear of a workers revolution.

"The C.P., by pursuing a policy of class collaboration in time of peace and by calling for 'People's Front governments' in time of war, is removing this fear and is making it very much easier for the bourgeoisie to engage in war. Thus, instead of maintaining peace as originally intended, the C.P. is aiding the cause of war. The line of the C.I. should be one of winning over that section of the working class still under the influence of reformism, and bringing it closer to communism and its aims thru a genuine proletarian united front; the C.I. should wage a bitter war on the bourgeois democratic parties with the intention of winning over the petty bourgeois masses under their influence and of allying them with the working class and its aims. Such a policy would result in the strengthening of the forces of peace and the defense of the Soviet Union because it coincides with the strengthening of the revolutionary forces in each capitalist country."²²

The Lovestone-Brandler group has been unalterably opposed to the present practice of the Comintern in advocating the imposition of sanctions against nations violating treaty agreements. It has quoted the Daily Worker of February 22, 1937, to indicate the present position of the C.I., which it has characterized as "social-chauvinism".

"'The Communist Party proposes that in the event of the danger of war, or an actual war between two or more nations, the Kellogg Peace Pact be invoked. Collaborating with other signatories of this pact, the United States can then enforce an embargo against the aggressor power, the nation threatening world peace. Such an aggressor can be defined as that state which declares war upon another state, or which uses its armed force, with or without declaration of war, to invade another state. Furthermore, an aggressor should be defined as an armed party or faction which by insurrection seeks to overthrow a democratic government.'" (Italics in Workers Age.)²³

This viewpoint, the I.L.L.A. has alleged, is doubly false and dangerous.

(1) Sanctions and collective security, if carried to their logical conclusion, lead to war. Workers must not and cannot advocate such sanctions unless they are prepared to support a war they have helped bring about.

(2) By definition (italized quotation), workers or exploited colonials who attempt to overthrow their democratic-capitalist governments are aggressors

²² Idem.

²³ Workers Age, March 13, 1937, p. 5.

who must be proceeded against promptly and vigorously.²⁴

As opposed to the advocacy and support of government sanctions, the I.L.L.A. has proposed workers' sanctions, which is independent working class action: boycotting the products of fascist aggressors; refusing to transport munitions to such countries; protesting against governmental laws and policies calculated to help them. Again only a workers' government, carrying out an "anti-imperialist program" may urge government sanctions; in such a case, the policies pursued would be for non-imperialists ends and purposes.²⁵

"The working class in any country cannot, directly or indirectly, associate itself with the politics or aims of any of the imperialist powers or combinations of such powers. . . Yet, in particular circumstances, it may be necessary and possible in the interest of the anti-imperialist aims of the working class, to raise demands for governmental action in the crisis. In England, for example, where the problem of sanctions is of such immediate concern, the line of the Labor Party in the recent election campaign should have been to point out that sanctions, as carried out by the Tory government, were essentially an instrument of British imperialist policy and to emphasize that only a Labor government could advocate and apply sanctions in a manner that would truly advance the cause of peace. . . because only a Labor government could or would couple sanctions with a general anti-imperialist program that would remove all possibility of such sanctions remaining an instrument of British imperialism. . . ."26

"Except in this form, as support of sanctions on an anti-imperialist basis by a labor government, sponsorship or advocacy of governmental sanctions would not advance but retard the interests of the working class in the present international situation, for objectively it would come to serve the aims of the pro-sanctionist-imperialist combination, . . . This, of course, does not preclude the possibility of raising -- for the sake of exposing the imperialist character of bourgeois foreign policy -- demands on the government, provided they are made an organic whole of an anti-imperialist program. The concrete demands we put to the government depend on the specific situation in each country. But in every case, the demands we make on a bourgeois government must be of a nature to expose its imperialist character and to advance the interests of the working class and colonial peoples, particularly those engaged in war at the moment. We demand of and dare the imperialist government to comply with our demands (including sanctions): its failure to do so or its sabotage of such demands only serves to

²⁴Idem.

²⁵Communist Party (Opposition), "Sanctions and the Proletariat," The International Class Struggle (Summer, 1936), Vol. I, No. 1, pp. 15-19.

²⁶Ibid., pp. 18-19.

reveal its imperialist aims and interests."²⁷

"'Concerted action' of the 'great democracies' is utterly futile and meaningless unless it involves a mutual security pact in the form of a military alliance, that is, unless it clearly recognizes that such action is, in its very nature, essentially a prelude to war. What, then, becomes of the pretty fable of 'collective security' as the 'alternative' to war? An 'alternative' to war should not require a military alliance as its 'indispensable condition'!

"The 'democratic' powers are to undertake to aid each other in case of a Japanese attack on their armed forces or territories. What are the 'armed forces or territories' of Great Britain, of France or of the Netherlands open to Japanese attack? Does anybody in his right mind contemplate a Japanese invasion of Europe at the present time? Of course not! What is meant is a Japanese attack on the colonies of the 'democratic' imperialist powers and on the armed forces stationed there! What is meant is a Japanese attack on Hongkong, on Singapore, on Indo-China, on the Dutch East Indies! 'Collective security', therefore, means a mutual military alliance of the imperialist 'democracies' to protect each other's colonies, each other's imperialistic loot, from the aggressions of hostile imperialist groups. In particular, it means for the United States to bind itself to go to war to guarantee the ill-gotten gains of the robber powers of Europe.

"But more than that! It means for the Soviet Union to bind itself to do the same thing. When the Franco-Soviet pact was signed, we were emphatically assured that it definitely excluded Soviet assistance to France in 'defense' of the latter's colonies. Now, in the name of 'collective security', the Soviet Union is to place itself under the obligation of using its Red Army to secure the colonial possessions not only of France but of England and the Netherlands as well!

"In a word, 'collective security' means collective action for war, collective action to safeguard the accumulated loot of one group of imperialist robber-powers against the greedy aggressions of another."²⁸

Failures of the People's Front. Even as the class collaboration policies of the Social Democrats failed in Austria and Germany, alleges the International Communist Opposition, so are they also doomed under the People's Front. Already in France, Spain, Great Britain, the United States, and elsewhere, the People's Front policies, far from hindering the rise of fascism, have actually helped its growth because of its failure to espouse vigorous working class policies, which can be the only effective check to a rising fascist menace.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 19.

²⁸ Workers Age, Feb. 5, 1938, p. 4.

France. In France, Lovestone has asserted, the Communist party has degenerated to a new low. It has openly declaimed against the class struggle;²⁹ it has made overtures to the Catholic Church;³⁰ it has blocked militant action on the labor front by liquidating great strike movements.³¹ On the colonial question, it has given up its agitation for liberation of colonies under the French imperialist yoke.³² As part of the People's Front government, it has failed to agitate strongly for the dissolution of the many fascist leagues;³³ it has failed to wage a fight for the liquidation of the fascist-officers in the French army;³⁴ it has failed to clamor for the opening of the French frontier for transporting supplies to Loyalist Spain, relying instead upon the hypocritical non-intervention agreements made by Britain and France with Hitler and Mussolini;³⁵ it has sanctioned a tremendous loan to Poland for building up its anti-Soviet military machine.³⁶

History has abundantly proved its contentions, the I.L.L.A. has declared. The vacillating policies of the French People's Front brought its ultimate defeat and collapse. Daladier, whom the Lovestoneites call the "product of the Popular Front", has embarked upon a road which has been moving steadily to the right, and to fascism, the I.L.L.A. analysis has disclosed; such results are inevitable when class struggle policies are abandoned in favor of class-collaboration based upon the class enemy's program.³⁷

"As long as the C.P. adheres to the People's Front in partnership with this out-and-out capitalist party, it will be a prisoner of that party and will, regardless of its best intentions, pursue a course harmful to the most

²⁹Lovestone, People's Front Illusion, p. 60.

³⁰Ibid., pp. 62, 65.

³¹Ibid., pp. 69-71.

³²Ibid., pp. 68-69.

³³Ibid., pp. 73-74.

³⁴Ibid., pp. 66-69.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 74-76, 21-22.

³⁶Ibid., p. 76.

³⁷Workers Age, Aug. 6, 1938, p. 4; Dec. 10, 1938, pp. 1-2.

vital interests of the workers as a class. We need but cite the recent vote of the C.P. deputies for the emergency decree seriously limiting the rights of the press -- a step towards suicide."³⁸

"Thru the machinery of the Popular Front, French capitalism was unable to use the 'men of the left' -- the Socialist, communist and trade-union leaders -- to do its dirty work for it in its hour of emergency.

"Now that the job has been done and French capitalism has no further use for them for the time being, they have been scrapped and the mask of the Popular Front dropped. French capitalism has now launched a direct offensive against labor, against the working masses, against the democratic rights of the people, an offensive looking towards the establishment of an authoritarian regime dominated by the army.

"The road to reaction and fascism in France has been laid out and paved by the Popular Front."³⁹

"For over two years, we were assured that the Popular Front would lead to the 'triumph of democracy'. Only a few months ago, Earl Browder proclaimed at a meeting in New York and in articles in the Daily Worker that the Popular Front had defeated reaction and was ushering in a 'popular government representing all democratic forces, including the communists'. But what has the Popular Front actually led to? To Daladier, to reaction and to rule by decree!"⁴⁰

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Spain. The Communist party of Spain was very severely taken to task for supporting the Spanish Popular Front, which Lovestone characterized as a weak government from its very inception. It was unable (or unwilling) to crush the plot of its fascist-minded generals when their activities were widely known.⁴² The situation of 1936 in Spain was held to be similar to that of Russia in 1917. Instead of urging a vigorous fight for the establishment of a dictatorship of the proletariat, the Comintern falsely labeled the issue as "democracy versus fascism", the I.L.L.A. charged.⁴³ The C.P. ruthlessly suppressed all opponents of its policies in Spain; Socialists, syndicalists, anarchists, members of the Workers Party of Marxist Unity (the "POUM") were subjected to the most brutal and indescribable

³⁸ Lovestone, op. cit., p. 78.

³⁹ Workers Age, Dec. 10, 1938, p. 1.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 2.

⁴¹ For general survey, see Wolfe, Civil War in Spain, passim.

⁴² Lovestone, op. cit., pp. 53-54. Wolfe, Civil War in Spain, pp. 18-23.

⁴³ Lovestone, op. cit., pp. 50, 54-56. Workers Age, April 25, 1936, p. 6.

tortures for opposing the Spanish "democracy" and counterposing "workers' and peasants' soviets".⁴⁴

In May, 1937, fighting broke out in Barcelona, Spain, behind the government lines. The leaders of the P.O.U.M., among others, were arrested. They were accused of "instigating an uprising" against the Spanish government and were brought to trial the following year, charged with espionage and desertion. The I.L.L.A. characterized these charges as false, and the trials as "frame-ups" by the Spanish G.P.U. which was intent upon crushing all opposition to Spanish Stalinism. Although the leaders of the P.O.U.M. were found guilty of participating in the "uprising", the charges of espionage and desertion were abandoned.⁴⁵ Thus did the Stalinists import into Spain all the treacherous policies which brought defeat to the international working class movement everywhere, the I.L.L.A. declared.

In Spain, the International Communist Opposition (including the I.L.L.A.) supported the policies of the POUM and accepted its thirteen point "program for the crisis". The following were its provisions:

- "1. Socialization of heavy industry and transport.
2. Nationalization of banking.
3. Municipalization of real estate.
4. Building an army controlled by the working class.
5. Constitution of a single Interior Security Corps, based on the Guard Patrols and the Investigation Corps, created by the revolution and incorporating the old police organizations that have demonstrated their loyalty to the working class.
6. Immediate offensive on the Aragon front.
7. Reduction of high salaries.
8. Monopoly of foreign trade.
9. Creation of a powerful war industry, socialized and rigorously centralized.
10. Nationalization of the land, insuring the product to those who work it and granting them the necessary credits. Collective cultivation of large estates and economic aid for those collective farms created

⁴⁴Workers Age, Nov. 6, 1937, pp. 1-4; Nov. 13, 1937, p. 2.

⁴⁵Workers Age, July 23, 1938, p. 1; Aug. 27, 1938, pp. 1,5; Sept. 17, 1938, pp. 1,2; Oct. 22, 1938, p. 3; Oct. 29, 1938, pp. 1,4; Dec. 3, 1938, p. 4.

during the course of the revolution which have demonstrated their vitality.

11. Implacable fight against monopolists and profiteers by means of a rigorous direct control of the distribution and price of food-stuffs.

12. Rapid and efficient organization of aerial and naval defense of all our territory.

13. Convocation of a congress of delegates of workers' and peasants' unions and soldiers to lay the fundamental bases of a new regime and from which would arise a workers' and peasants' government -- a government which would be the most democratic possible, which would express unequivocally the will of the great majority of the people, and which would have complete authority to ensure the new revolutionary order."⁴⁶

In supporting the P.O.U.M., the Lovestoneites denied that the P.O.U.M. was a Trotskyist organization. Although its founders included former Trotskyists, the POUM repudiated and in turn was repudiated by them.⁴⁷

Present Leadership Must Be Deposed. The resolutions adopted by the International Communist Opposition since 1937 have been of one vein: the present leadership of the Comintern must be deposed.

"It is urgently necessary, in the interest of Soviet power and of communism, that the Central Committee, headed by Stalin, should be removed. It is, however, no less urgently necessary, in the interest of the world communist movement, to remove this same leadership from the Communist International."⁴⁸

"The removal of Stalin and his clique from the C.I. leadership is the primary prerequisite for arriving at long last at a condition in which we will be able, honestly and truthfully, to sum up and draw the balance sheet of the fateful policy of the C.I. over the entire period since the death of Lenin -- the ultra left as well as the ultra-right days. . . ."⁴⁹

"If the C.I. is to be salvaged, if it is to be revived, if it is to be restored on a basis of communist principles and if it is again to become a vital and progressive force in the international labor movement, then the first and foremost requirement of the day is the removal of its leadership, headed by Stalin, and the demand for a strict accounting of its actions. The salvaging and regeneration of the Communist International is not only necessary but possible because, in almost all communist parties there still exists a more or less substantial nucleus of members loyal to communism, and only the officers and their bureaucratic apparatus are rotten."⁵⁰

⁴⁶Lambda (August Thalheimer), The Truth About the Barcelona Events, pp. 21-22. Also see Thesis of Andres Nin, in Wolfe, op. cit., pp. 92-112.

⁴⁷Wolfe, op. cit., pp. 67-71.

⁴⁸Workers Age, Aug. 14, 1937, p. 6.

⁴⁹Idem.

⁵⁰Idem.

Criticism of Communist Party Soviet Union -- 1935-1937

Soviet Foreign Policy. The criticism made by the International Communist Opposition of the foreign policy of the C.P., U.S.S.R., was to a very large measure implicit in the former's criticism of the People's Front orientation of the Communist International: The Russian section of the C.I. has permitted its foreign policy to negate the Comintern's policies for carrying on a vigorous struggle for revolutionary Marxism in its other sections. As a result, the proletariat outside of the U.S.S.R. has suffered.

"But the most serious persistent errors of Soviet foreign policy are to be found in the transference of tactics from this field to the field of Comintern strategy. To us it is axiomatic that the interests of the Soviet proletariat and those of the proletariat of the rest of the world are identical and cannot under any circumstances conflict with each other. However, it is equally axiomatic to us that the tactics employed by the working class of the capitalist world for the maintenance and extension of its interests must necessarily be different from the tactics employed by the proletariat in the Soviet world for the maintenance and extension of its interests. The reasons for this identity of interests and differentiation of methods and tactics employed in their defense are: common goal, common enemy but different level of the class struggle. In the U.S.S.R. the workers have already won power. They control gigantic military and economic resources. In the capitalist world we still have numerous tasks to achieve before we reach this stage of the class struggle. . . .

"As a result of this transference of tactics from the realm of Soviet diplomacy to the field of the international class struggle in which the Comintern plays its role, the entire policy of the CI is today distorted. In fact, the Comintern's break with principle in the application of the People's Front policy and its dropping of the Leninist position on the question of imperialist war are traceable primarily to this transference of tactics and strategy from the field of Soviet foreign policy and diplomacy to the field of international communist strategy and tactics. . . .

"There is no doubt that the Soviet Union is facing an extremely difficult international situation. There is no doubt that in its foreign policy as well as in its other policies the U.S.S.R. deserves and must get the unstinted support of the labor movement of every country. But such support which is essential to the basic interests of the entire international working class cannot be effective unless the above-mentioned errors are corrected and their recurrence made impossible. Only then will the victories of Soviet foreign policy be of still greater aid to the victory of the

world revolution."¹

Another significant criticism made of Soviet foreign policy was the latter's collaboration with capitalist powers for the solution of problems of smaller sovereign states. The I.L.L.A. alleged that in the Spanish crisis, the diplomacy of the U.S.S.R. failed signally to defend the Spanish workers from fascist aggression and the machinations of the capitalist powers; in every instance, the Soviet diplomats were outmaneuvered and contributed to the betrayal of the workers' cause in Spain.

"In the initial stages of its foreign policy in regard to Spain the Soviet Union broke one of its time-honored and most commendable practices when it agreed to enter into an arrangement whereby a group of big powers would determine the fate of a smaller or weaker country. In this fashion, the U.S.S.R. not only failed to render practical aid to the Spanish government forces, not only failed to put obstacles in the path of the 'great democracies' of France and England aiding the Spanish Fascists by acts of omission and commission, but objectively aided the Hitler and Mussolini bandits to cover up with the cloak of the International Neutrality Commission their armed aid to the Spanish Fascists -- in violation of the most elementary principles of even capitalist international law. This policy was leading the U.S.S.R. to outright disaster. It tended to set precedents which could only facilitate ruin for the U.S.S.R., the smaller countries, and colonial and semi-colonial people at the hands of the big imperialist powers in the future."²

Criticism of the Communist Party Soviet Union -- Since 1937

As has been indicated, the year 1937 also marked the turning point in attitude taken by the Lovestoneites toward the Stalin regime in the Soviet Union.¹ Formerly having taken the position that Stalin's errors were honest mistakes, it now held that the Stalin bureaucracy was utterly corrupt and was preparing its own downfall.

"Events of recent months prove that Stalin and his clique -- it is not a special class of society, but just a small clique which is terrorizing

¹Workers Age, Nov. 14, 1936, p. 4.

²Idem.

¹Workers Age, March 26, 1938, p. 5.

the party -- are trying, by every device of terror and defamation of their opponents, to prevent the actual removal of the bureaucratic regime which prolifically spawns under their care and which they themselves are driving to extremes. Recent events confirm the fact that Stalin and his clique are merely out to protect their personal authority at all costs, by tooth and nail, and that they will stop at nothing, not even at dealing destruction to the soviet state and to communism, not even at compromising both of them gravely. The Stalin regime has turned viciously against the soviet power itself, against the dictatorship of the proletariat, against communism. With his own hands, Stalin himself is wrecking what he himself helped build: the party, the soviet administration, soviet economy, the G.P.U., the army, soviet diplomacy, soviet science, etc."²

"Therefore, it is the most imperative prerequisite for the benefit of the Soviet Union to remove Stalin and his clique from the leadership of the C.P.S.U. and thus of the soviet state. . . ."³

"We are thoroly convinced that, at bottom, the C.P.S.U. itself is perfectly sound. The best proof of its soundness was revealed in the energy with which party members began to express their criticism of the party bureaucracy. We are convinced that the C.P.S.U. will muster within itself the strength to overcome the crisis of the bureaucratic regime and that it will see to it that a solution is reached along lines leading to a strengthening of soviet power by enlarging its base and to a rehabilitation of the hard-hit prestige of communism."⁴

"In the Soviet Union, which is a state where the working class rules and socialism is in the making, this historically necessary process can take place thru the channel of revolution. No repetition of revolution is required -- that is to say, the ruling class of the Soviet Union need not be superseded by another class. What must be removed is not a privileged class but a small clique without any social base, namely, the topmost excrescence of the bureaucratic regime which is forcibly blocking the historical advance of the soviet state and of communism in the Soviet Union in the interest of their own personal positions of power. Therefore, the role played by them, the once revolutionary and progressive, has now become counter-revolutionary and reactionary."⁵

The Soviet Constitution. The new Soviet Constitution has also been critically examined and found wanting: to the extent that the Soviet bureaucrats exercise a complete control, unrestrained by law, over the workings of the Constitution, its democratic provisions for fundamental rights and liber-

²Resolution of the International Communist Opposition, "On the Crisis in the Regime of the C.P.S.U.," Workers Age, Aug. 14, 1937, p. 5.

³Idem.

⁴Idem.

⁵Idem.

ties are utterly without significance.

"In view of the recent events, the articles of the 'Stalin Constitution' of the Soviet Union, which granted greater rights to the working class and which 'guarantee' the immunity of persons, etc., read like a gruesome mockery. The reign of terror imposed by the Stalin-Yezhoff clique upon the party and the soviet state has put a bloody check on this constitution. There can be no hope for any kind of democratic rights either inside or outside the party when more than physical terror is let loose against all persons, who, in the eyes of the 'Central Committee with Stalin at its head', seem suspicious, dangerous or not loyal to the leaders."⁶

"It is quite clear that under these conditions, the present Soviet elections, in so far as they depend upon the intentions of the Stalin leadership, can be nothing but a miserable farce. What sense can the elections in the various Soviet organs have if Stalin and his clique, before the elections are run off, appoint to or discharge anybody from the Soviet apparatus, the C.P.S.U., the Comintern and crown it all by arrests and executions!"⁷

The German Refugee Problem. The I.L.L.A. has deplored the fact that the U.S.S.R. has found it impossible to make room within its vast borders for some of the German-Jewish refugees. It rejected all explanations of Stalin, deeming them rationalizations to hide the obvious fact that his regime does not want outsiders, lest further disillusionment be spread.⁸

The Moscow Trials -- 1936-1938

Early Position of I.L.L.A. -- First Two Trials. In discussing their attitude to the first two Moscow trials, several questions were considered by the Lovestone-Brandler group: the innocence or guilt of the defendants; the significance of the trials; the role of the Trotskyists in these alleged conspiracies.

Commenting on these early trials, the Communist Party Opposition admitted that the testimony was incomplete and the evidence somewhat conflict-

⁶Workers Age, Aug. 14, 1937, p. 5.

⁷Workers Age, Sept. 11, 1937, p. 2.

⁸Workers Age, Nov. 26, 1938, p. 6; Dec. 17, 1938, p. 4.

ing but its editorial comment on the trials and execution of Zinoviev and Kamenev in August, 1936, was unequivocal:

" . . . We are convinced that there is no adequate reason at hand to doubt the confessions made by the accused. We can see how there can be discussion as to the manner of the confessions, their grovelling character, but we do not see any reason to doubt the genuineness of the confessions."¹

Of the second, the Bukharin-Platakov trials (Oct., 1936), the Workers Age carried no direct statement until February, 1937, when it ran a series of editorials, "The Moscow Trial in Historical Perspective".² Here it attempted no detailed analysis of alleged conflicting testimonies and inadequate evidence. It took what it regarded as the broader viewpoint. It declared:

" . . . In effect, we practically ignore the charges, refutations and counter-charges, and ask ourselves: Which tendency was carrying forward the interests of the revolution and which was obstructing it? Some may be shocked at this utterly 'unmoral' approach but it seems to be the approach of history!"³

"Now, according to the approach I am here suggesting, the truth or untruth of the specific charges may be a very interesting and important consideration but it seems to me to be largely secondary and even irrelevant to the main question under discussion -- our fundamental estimation of the Moscow trial as an act of political suppression. . . ."⁴

" . . . When objective judgment is passed on the Moscow trials, it must surely be done on the basis of the all-absorbing question: Is it Stalin or the Trotskyist opposition that, by and large, represents the basic interests of the socialist revolution in Russia, that is the bearer of the fundamentally sound policies of socialist construction? And on this question our position has been made clear more than once. The course of events itself, moreover, has pretty generally confirmed the viewpoint of Stalin as against that of Trotsky . . ."⁵

At a later date (Spring 1937) the International Communist Opposition

¹Workers Age, Sept. 5, 1936, p. 2.

²Workers Age, Feb. 13, 1937, p. 3; Feb. 20, 1937, p. 3.

³Workers Age, Feb. 13, 1937, p. 3.

⁴Idem.

⁵The Moscow Trials, An Editorial Statement, Workers Age, Feb. 20, 1937, p. 3.

expressed "serious doubts concerning the validity of the evidence" in the Radek-Piatakov Trials.⁶ But its general evaluation of these trials remained unchanged.

Wisdom of Executing Defendants. After the Zinoviev-Kamenev and Radek-Piatakov trials, the opinion was nevertheless expressed that the execution of these former Bolshevik leaders showed a great shortsightedness on the part of the leadership of the C.P., U.S.S.R.

" . . . we must state that we very seriously doubt the wisdom and tact of the Soviet authorities in inflicting the merited punishment of death on such personages as Zinoviev, Kamenev, Smirnov, etc. Other and sufficiently adequate punishment could have been meted out without resorting to executions, and thus granting some recognition to the inestimable services once rendered by those erstwhile powerful figures in the ranks of the Bolsheviks. . . ."7

Significance of First Two Trials. Guilt or innocence aside, the International Communist Opposition regarded the prosecutions as a great blow to the morale and prestige of the Soviet Union: the proceedings cast some doubts upon the honesty and integrity of the leadership of the first great Workers' State, thereby throwing the entire system into disrepute among some sections of the international working class. The I.L.L.A. considered this another consequence of the high-handed manner in which the affairs of the Communist International and the C.P., U.S.S.R. were conducted; it concluded that only a return to the principles of Lenin -- democratic centralism and genuine inner-party democracy -- would make unnecessary any underground activity on the part of oppositionary elements and thereby prevent further incidents leading to other Moscow trials.

" . . . we express our profound conviction that, from whatever angle they may be viewed, the Moscow trials constitute an unmitigated disaster -- alike to the revolutionary movement of the world and to the Soviet Union.

⁶"The Radek Piatakov Trial," International Class Struggle (Spring 1937), Vol. I, No. 3, p. 165.

⁷Workers Age, Sept. 5, 1936, p. 2.

Only a complete overhauling of the whole system of political leadership and inner-party life in the communist movement, such as has long been advocated by the International Communist Opposition, holds out hope for the future. Those who are deeply concerned with all that the situation may mean for the Soviet Union, its leading party and the international labor movement, will aid us in redoubling our efforts to achieve inner-party democracy and collective leadership in the Communist International and all its sections, including the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. It is the only guarantee of a healthy communist movement!"⁸

Tukhachevsky Purge. In the matter of the subsequent purges of Yagoda of the G.P.U. and Tukhachevsky and other heads of the Red Army in the Spring of 1937, the Communist Party Opposition rejected the allegations of their guilt.⁹

As Lovestone declared:

" . . . I reject as generally unfounded the accusations against these people. In doing so, I am not assuming any responsibility for what they ever did or failed to do. Likewise in doing so, I am paying no tribute to Stalin. . . ."¹⁰

" . . . To me the recent demotions, arrests, accusations, suicides and executions mark the low point of the Stalin hero-cult. To me, they emphasize that the scoundrel or culprit cult is but an inevitable and inseparable phase -- only the reverse side of the hero-cult."¹¹

After the Tukhachevsky purge, the Lovestone group became more outspoken in its conclusions: the executions resulted from the determination of a bureaucrat, Stalin, to retain at all costs his grip upon the Comintern and the C.P., U.S.S.R. against an ever-growing opposition to his disastrous policies within both organizations.¹²

" . . . I have a growing conviction that the Stalin system of leadership has about run its course in the C.P.S.U. and, therefore, in the Comintern. I set no dates for improvement or vital change, but I think that the full logic of his ruinous regime is about to appear. I do not think there is much worse that the Stalin system can bring into the life of the C.P.S.U. and, therefore, into the life of the Comintern. I do not think there is a much lower point to which the Stalin regime can sink."¹³

⁸Workers Age, Feb. 20, 1937, p.5. Also see "The Radek-Piatakov Trial, op. cit., p. 166.

⁹Workers Age, July 10, 1937, pp. 4-5.

¹⁰Workers Age, July 3, 1937, p. 5.

¹¹Idem.

¹²Workers Age, July 10, 1937, pp. 4-5.

¹³Workers Age, July 3, 1937, p. 6.

Role of Trotskyists in First Two Trials. The Lovestons-Brandler

group maintained that Trotsky's Thermidorian thesis together with his advocacy of the formation of a new political party in the Soviet Union, tantamount to the espousal of civil war, left him vulnerable to charges of terrorism and conspiracy, whether or not in fact he committed or advocated the commission of such acts. Thus, in 1934, after the Kirov assassination, Trotsky was held guilty of indirectly contributing to the assassination because of the position he had been consistently taking:

" . . . I wish to reject the insinuation that Trotsky plotted or desired the assassination of any Soviet leader. Yet I cannot overlook the fact that Trotsky has come out for civil war in the Soviet Union, declared even that it is already on. (See The Militant, August 26, 1933). But a civil war needs great masses. When its advocates in the Soviet Union are reduced to a little handful, any efforts at carrying on a civil war that 'is now on', can only be reduced to individual acts of sabotage and assassination."¹⁴

During the Zinoviev-Kamenev trials and after the executions, the Communist Party Opposition accepted the evaluation of the role of the Trotskyists as set forth by the prosecution. The Trotskyists were referred to in the CPO literature as "terrorist conspirators" who would stop at nothing to achieve their ends.

"Politically the degeneration of Trotsky and his fading followers into an outfit dedicated to terrorism in the Soviet Union is no surprise and is entirely understandable.

" . . . The further revelations made on the occasion of the last trial which was an open public trial at which the defendants had every opportunity to express themselves as fully and as freely as they wanted, showed still more clearly and established beyond a shadow of a doubt that the Nazi government had aided and abetted some of the Trotskyist terrorist conspirators. To some people this sounds fantastic, but if one considers the present character of the Trotsky program in regards to the Soviet Union there is nothing fantastic about it but only a quite natural and logical outcome of the entire evolution of Trotskyism. . . .

" . . . It is this fundamental political position, undoubtedly counter-revolutionary in nature, which affords the primary basis and paramount motivation of the conduct of Trotsky and his followers and collaborators in organizing terroristic activities inside the Soviet Union. . . ."¹⁵

¹⁴ Wolfe, Things We Want to Know, pp. 26-27. Also see Workers Age, Sept. 5, 1936, p. 2.

¹⁵ Workers Age, Sept. 5, 1936, p. 2.

After the Radek-Piatakov Trial, although some doubts were subsequently expressed concerning the extent to which the evidence and testimony proved the guilt of the accused beyond the possibility of doubt, the Trotskyists were held " . . . morally responsible for what was done in the name of Trotskyism against the C.P.S.U. and the Soviet State."¹⁶ At the same time, the International Communist Opposition disclaimed any identity with "fascist Trotskyism"¹⁷ and did not wish to be tarred with the same brush for so expressing its doubts regarding the complete guilt of the defendants.¹⁸

The Moscow Trials -- 1938. In 1938, the I.L.L.A. reversed its conclusion on the trials. It confessed that it was originally mistaken in holding Trotsky and the executed defendants guilty of conspiracy with Germany and Japan against the Soviet Union, as charged by Stalin. Instead, it became convinced that the hue and cry of "Trotskyism" had been raised against all who opposed the bureaucratic rule of the Stalin clique, without regard to their political views.¹⁹

"What is the real situation in the U.S.S.R.?"

"The savage terror against party members who have never been critical of Stalin, against dissenting or dissatisfied party, government, trade union, economic, foreign-affairs and cultural leaders is the expression of the antagonism between the social economic advance registered in recent years and the obsolete, historically outlived Stalin regime.

"Here is a bureaucratic clique which is trying to perpetuate itself by sheer brute force, barbaric terror, blackest frame-up and wanton blood spilling. The Soviet masses who have lived thru the famine, fought thru the civil war or made great sacrifices insuring heavy industrialization and rural collectivization, now feel that the time has arrived for the expansion of their democratic rights. . . .

"It is these wants and desires of the masses that Stalin and Co. have been trying to eradicate and crush. . . ."20

¹⁶"The Radek-Piatakov Trial," op. cit., p. 166.

¹⁷Idem.

¹⁸Idem.

¹⁹Workers Age, March 12, 1938, pp. 1,2; March 19, 1938, pp. 3,6; April 9, 1938, pp. 1,2; Dec. 17, 1938, p. 1.

²⁰Workers Age, April 9, 1938, pp. 1,2.

In reviewing The Case of Leon Trotsky, by John Dewey and members of the Preliminary Commission of Inquiry in Mexico City, Bertram Wolfe unequivocally stated that he had changed his mind about Trotsky's guilt:

" . . . The writer owns that his previous position was to give credence rather to Stalin than to Trotsky, but a re-reading of the Moscow confessions together with the present work, or rather its closing speech, carried literally overwhelming conviction that Trotsky could not have done the things charged against him in the Zinoviev-Kemenev and Radek-Platakov trials.

"Moreover, the subsequent epidemic of executions of 'Trotskyist-Bukharin-Zinoviev-foreign-spy-diversionist-bourgeois-nationalist-scoundrel-wrecker-traitor-Gestapo-agent hyphenates' has been on such a scale as to make the Mexican hearings largely superfluous. In picturing the long exiled Trotsky as in control of virtually all the leading posts in the army, the GPU, the Party, youth, industry, agriculture and the premierships and party secretaryships of over a score of the autonomous republics of the USSR, Stalin has literally proved too much and reduced the original charges to absurdity."²¹

Will Herberg, reviewing the same book for the Workers Age, came to similar conclusions. He, too, admitted that the Lovestone group had been mistaken in accepting Stalin's indictment of Trotsky on its face. A careful reading of this book, he declared, had convinced him that Trotsky was not guilty as charged.²²

" . . . Trotsky scores brilliantly. After reading these pages, there cannot remain the slightest doubt in the mind of any literate person that the charges and allegations made against Trotsky and the other better-known defendants at the Moscow trials, are just a tissue of not very cleverly concocted falsehoods. Not a shred of 'evidence' remains intact under critical scrutiny. On the contrary, this 'evidence' is demonstrably shot thru with glaring contradictions, material discrepancies and sheer impossibilities. . . . The Moscow trials stand exposed, beyond the shadow of a doubt, as a very brazen tho not very clever political frame-up."²³

" . . . By and large, Trotskyism was dragged in only in order to 'smear' the new oppositional elements and discredit them in the eyes of the people who had for years been taught to see Trotsky as the veritable anti-Christ. . . ."²⁴

²¹Bertram D. Wolfe, "Trotsky's Defense," New Republic (Nov. 24, 1937), Vol. LXXXIII, No. 1199, p. 79. Also see New Republic (Dec. 8, 1937), Vol. LXXXIII, No. 1201, p. 154.

²²Herberg, "The Case of Leon Trotsky," -- a book review, Workers Age, Dec. 18, 1937, p. 3.

²³Idem.

²⁴Idem.

But in acknowledging its error in the matter of Trotsky's guilt, the Independent Labor League of America has not thereby modified its views on "Trotskyism". These have remained substantially unchanged.²⁵

Criticism of the Communist Party, U.S.A. -- 1935-1937

Since the Seventh World Congress, the Communist Party, U.S.A. has attempted to apply the conception of the People's Front to the American scene; this application has formed the basis of the numerous criticisms made by the Lovestone group. The gist has been that the introduction of the People's Front in the United States has given rise to opportunism in the political arena and on the economic front, to the point where the principles of Marxism-Leninism have been abandoned.¹

The New "American Approach" The Communist party, it has been alleged, has traveled a long way from its early position when it kept itself aloof from an approach in terms of an "American revolutionary tradition". But, under the People's Front orientation, the American revolutionary tradition has emerged from its early obscurity; in fact, the Communist party has gone the whole hog in proclaiming its adherence to it. In order to maintain its thesis, the C.P. has re-written and falsified American history, it has been alleged; in place of the usual Marxian appraisals of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, for example, as representatives of definite capitalist forces in the United States, the C.P. has presented them as revolutionists fighting for liberty and democracy: "1776 -- George Washington fought for liberty and democracy. 1936 -- We must fight to preserve it."² In short,

²⁵Idem.

¹Lovestone, The People's Front Illusion, p. 30.

²Workers Age, May 23, 1936, p. 6.

under the new line, Communism has become "Twentieth Century Americanism".³

The Lovestone group has maintained that its theory of "exceptionalism" has always demanded an American approach based upon the American revolutionary tradition; but this approach has never involved an opportunistic re-evaluation. American history has a genuine revolutionary basis which does not require falsification and distortion.⁴

"'Communism', we are proudly told, 'is the Americanism of the twentieth century. . . .' But may we note that there are today, as there always have been, two kinds of Americanism, in direct political opposition to each other: reactionary Americanism and progressive Americanism, if that term must be used. Communism may be the twentieth century version of the Americanism of Tom Paine, Daniel Shays, Thomas Jefferson, John Brown or Wendell Phillips but certainly not of the Americanism of Washington, Hamilton, Daniel Webster or even Abraham Lincoln. . . ."⁵

The Farmer-Labor Party. In its support of a Farmer-Labor party, the American form of the People's Front, there is again observable a complete right-about-face of the Communist party, the Lovestone group has contended. The writings of Earl Browder during the Third Period Communism in the United States, for example, disclosed that the Labor party was the essence of social-fascism.⁶ Under its new orientation, it has again swung to the other extreme, embracing an amorphous Farmer-Labor party which has included both working and non-working class elements. Thus the Daily Worker for Feb. 22, 1936 declared editorially: "'A Farmer Labor Party -- of trade unions, Middle Class and Negro people and Anti-Fascists -- is the correct way to carry out the real American traditions championed by Washington!'"⁷

Jay Lovestone, who declared, "Once again, we sound the alarm!" has offered the C.P.O. viewpoint on this kind of a Farmer-Labor party:

³Lovestone, Op. cit., pp. 30-31. Workers Age, July 18, 1936, p. 2.

⁴Workers Age, June 27, 1936, p. 4.

⁵Idem.

⁶Workers Age, April 27, 1935, p. 2.

⁷Quoted in Workers Age, May 23, 1936, p. 6.

" . . . Not everyone who is for capitalism is for Fascism. Not everyone who is against Fascism is against capitalism. There are plenty of good, bad and very bad capitalists who are against Fascism and perfectly satisfied with bourgeois democracy as the state form to be maintained, as the type of capitalist class dictatorship to prevail. What business have such forces inside a Labor Party which is to be a distinct proletarian class party?"⁸

1936 Election Campaign. The 1936 presidential campaign conducted by the Communist party showed all the ineptitudes of the People's Front approach, the C.P.O. alleged. Although the C.P. presented its own candidate, Earl Browder, the manner in which it conducted its campaign left no doubt that it indirectly gave aid and support to F. D. Roosevelt, the Democratic nominee, it was charged. Prior to 1935, Browder had made statements in Communism in the United States plainly branding the New Deal as measures for the establishment of fascism; he had also spoken of Roosevelt as a potential fascist.⁹ But by 1936, the C.P. discovered that the character of Roosevelt and the nature of the New Deal had undergone a profound change, declared the CPO; no longer was Roosevelt a fascist or a menacing threat, but the upholder of democracy, as contrasted with Alf Landon, the candidate of Hearst and the Liberty Leaguers and all fascist and anti-democratic forces in this country. In consequence the keynote of all Browder's speeches was "Defeat Landon at all costs". That he urged all to "Vote Communist" was also true; but the C.P.O. declared that the emphasis was upon the defeat of Landon, even at the expense of votes for Browder. The implication that one could defeat Landon only by voting for Roosevelt was thus drawn by countless followers of the Communist party, the Lovestoneites concluded.¹⁰

The C.P.O. rejected this C.P. analysis almost in toto. It recognized

⁸Idem. Also quoted in Lovestone, op. cit., pp. 36-37.

⁹Workers Age, Sept. 28, 1935, p. 1.

¹⁰Workers Age, June 13, 1936, p. 3; July 4, 1936, p. 1; Aug. 22, 1936, p. 2. Lovestone, op. cit., pp. 34-35.

that differences existed between Landon and Roosevelt, but that these differences were not fundamental and basic; that neither Landon and the Republican party, no more than Roosevelt, wanted fascism, unless they were unable to keep the capitalist system functioning in any other way; that in the last analysis the campaign was an arbitrary attempt to manufacture a People's Front in the United States.¹¹

"To declare that there is 'no difference at all' between Roosevelt and Landon, . . . , is absurdly false on the face of it. But equally false is the notion, shared by the Communist Party, . . . , that Landon is the representative of a fascist concentration, while Roosevelt is the spokesman, 'hesitant' and 'vacillating', it is true, of the forces of anti-fascism, progress and democracy. Such a notion reflects, first of all, a serious failure to grasp the real nature of fascism. In America, as everywhere else, fascism appears as a petty bourgeois mass movement, with a pseudo-radical program disguising its savagely reactionary aims and its servitude to big capital, a movement politically organized as a 'new' (third) party against the existing two-party system. Neither the Liberty League nor the Republican Party, bitterly reactionary tho they undoubtedly are, constitute such a movement today. The fact of the matter is that the ruling class of this country neither wants nor needs fascism today; the old system of parliamentary democracy is still entirely capable of fulfilling its function as the machinery of the political domination of the bourgeoisie. . . . One thing is obvious: as between Roosevelt and Landon, fascism is not the issue!"¹²

For other evidences of the alleged crass opportunism of the Communist party, the CPO pointed to that party's endorsement of the anti-working class policies of the National Negro Congress;¹³ it also alleged that in the trade unions the C.P. used similar tactics to build a broad base, even resorting to alliances with reactionary groups, as long as it was able to achieve a People's Front.¹⁴

Vote Communist! Despite its criticisms of the Communist party (from 1929 to 1937), the Communist Party Opposition consistently urged its members at election time to "Vote Communist!" For example, in the 1936 Presidential

¹¹The 1936 Election Campaign and the Position of the Communist Party U.S.A. (Opposition), passim.

¹²Ibid., p. 1.

¹³Workers Age, March 21, 1936, pp. 3,6; Oct. 16, 1937, pp. 3,6

¹⁴Workers Age, Oct. 26, 1935, p. 3; June 27, 1936, p. 4.

election, the CPO had been urged to support the candidacy of Norman Thomas, of the Socialist party, because the platform of the S.P. on issues like "collective security" and "democracy versus fascism" was more nearly in accord with the position of the CPO than that advanced by the C.P. This plea was nevertheless rejected on these grounds:

" . . . In choosing between Thomas and Browder, you really choose between the official socialist and the official communist movements in this country; even more, you choose between the Communist and Socialist International. Now, whatever may be the opportunistic crimes of the C.I., and they are many and heavy, it is nevertheless a fact that the two Internationals cannot be regarded as by any means on the same plane politically. The reformism of the L.S.I. is obviously far crasser and far more deeply ingrained than that of the C.I. . . . Our election position is determined by this fundamental attitude -- we therefore call for support of the Communist Party ticket, headed by Earl Browder."¹⁵

"But, while we thus support Browder in the elections, we do so in complete dissociation from his platform and election appeal, which we condemn without reservation. Our call to vote for Browder is an appeal to vote for communism, for a movement and principles that the C.P. alone represents in these elections, despite its present uncommunist policies; . . . "¹⁶

Criticism of the Communist Party, U.S.A. -- Since 1937

Since its irrevocable break with the Communist International in 1937, the attacks made by the I.L.L.A. on the Communist party in the United States have been exceedingly sharp and acrimonious. The Lovestoneites have both deplored and condemned the "degeneration" of the C.P., U.S.A. from the party of Lenin to a party of opportunism, compromise, and collaboration with American imperialists.¹ In the main, criticism has been directed chiefly at: (1) The alleged support given to American imperialism by the C.P. (2) The opportunist trade union policies and disruptive tactics pursued by the C.P.

¹⁵The 1936 Election Campaign and the Position of the Communist Party U.S.A. (Opposition), p. 4.

¹⁶Idem.

¹Workers Age, May 28, 1938, pp. 1,3.

in the unions. (3) Its unprincipled labor party policies.

Support of American Imperialism.² According to the I.L.L.A.'s version, the C.P. has been actively aid and abetting American imperialist ventures in South America, Central America and China, on the theory that endorsement of American imperialism is justifiable if it will succeed in lining up the United States against Germany and Japan in a common cause with the Soviet Union. This, it appears to the I.L.L.A., is the only explanation which lends consistency to the position taken by the C.P. in supporting the foreign policy of President Roosevelt and Secretary Hull. Hence it has characterized the C.P. as "The American War Party".³

According to a Workers Age editorial, Earl Browder urged in the Daily Worker of April 28, 1938, the investment of capital by United States bankers in China, in these words:

"The only prospect of profitable investment of American capital is China. But if the United States really wanted to put our thirteen million unemployed back to work, to put unemployed capital back to work, the United States government, should invest about five billions in building up Chinese industry. We should, by agreement with the Chinese government, produce machines here and, at the same time, build up new industry, which will enable the Chinese to ward off fascist invasion."⁴

Commenting on this statement, the I.L.L.A. declared:

"These words . . . are well worth pondering, for they represent a significant new stage in the political degeneration of Stalinist 'communism'.

"What is the plain meaning of these words? According to Browder, big American investments in China would bring great benefits to the American workers as well as to the Chinese people -- to the former, by speeding recovery and providing employment at home; to the latter by stimulating the industrial development of their country. American labor ought, therefore, to support, encourage and promote the large-scale export of American capital to China; in brief, American labor ought to get behind an aggressive policy of financial penetration and imperialism in the Far East!"⁵

²Workers Age, Dec. 18, 1937, p. 2; Jan. 1, 1938, p. 2; Feb. 5, 1938, p. 4. March 12, 1938, pp. 1,5; March 26, 1938, p. 4; April 23, 1938, p. 3; May 21, 1938, p. 4; Sept. 24, 1938, pp. 2,3.

³Workers Age, Sept. 24, 1938, p. 2.

⁴Workers Age, May 21, 1938, p. 4.

⁵Idem.

" . . . Imperialism, manifesting itself primarily in the export of capital to 'backward' countries, may indeed bring a brief and fitful prosperity to certain select groups at home; but the great masses of the people, as Lenin point out over twenty years ago, have nothing to gain from it and very much to lose. In the long run, imperialism only aggravates the conditions of capitalism in decline, with disemployment, misery and war following in its train. As for the people in the 'backward' countries, what do they get out of financial penetration and control from abroad except the perversion and distortion of their normal economic development for the benefit of the foreign investors, except economic slavery which inevitably turns into political subjection? Is it really necessary at this late date to begin exposing again the menace of imperialism, the brutal exploitation, political reaction and social corruption that it brings at home and abroad?"⁶

Evaluating the "peace" proposals advanced by the League for Peace and Democracy, whose essential plank has been collective security to "quarantine the aggressor nations", and whose program was endorsed in toto by the C.P., the Workers Age declared:

" . . . The Congress for Peace and Democracy is the first big step of the Communist Party to mobilize labor for war, the first big effort to launch a mass movement in support of American imperialism's program of aggression. Our criticisms of the old American League Against War and Fascism, such as its sectarian character, its petty-bourgeois composition, its inability to make an effective approach to the labor movement, are now completely thrown into the shade by the great fact that the League, in its new form, is no longer opposed to war in any, even the most remote, sense but is, in fact as in intention, a movement to foment war and to open the way for a dictatorial regime virtually indistinguishable in its operations from fascism. . . ." ⁷

At a speech in Boston, Earl Browder said:

"I have no hesitation in declaring, for the Communist Party and its followers, that with the central thoughts and the direction of President Roosevelt's speech, we are in practical agreement and that, on such questions with which we disagree, these are not questions for immediate and practical solution."⁸

The Independent Communist Labor League's answer to Browder was an article with a caption heavily bordered in black, entitled: "In Memoriam: The Communist Party -- Born 1919 - Died 1937." Bertram Wolfe, the author,

⁶ Idem.

⁷ Workers Age, Dec. 18, 1937, p. 2 .

⁸ Wolfe, "In Memoriam: The Communist Party," Workers Age, Sept. 29, 1937, p. 1.

delivered a bitter attack against what he regarded as the great betrayal of Communist fundamentals by the Communist party.

"A communist party is nothing if it is not revolutionary. If it gives up as its aim the overthrow of capitalism, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the proletarian revolution, there is nothing to distinguish it from a social-democratic party, a labor party, a populist party, from bourgeois democrats, liberals and reformists generally. Once it ceases to be revolutionary, it ceases to exist. Dead men continue to bear the names they bore while living; they are corpses just the same.

"By the above tokens, the Communist Party of the United States is no more. On September 19, 1937, after a lingering and painful illness, it died of bourgeois democratic illusions, vulgar hallucinations and constitutional anemia, complicated by acute diarrhea of words and chronic constipation of thoughts. . . ."9

"From the party of workers united front to the party of People's Front; from the party of class struggle to the party of class collaboration; from the party of the proletarian revolution to the party of counter-revolution. The Communist Party of the United States is dead. In Boston, in Symphony Hall, with Earl Browder pronouncing the funeral oration, it was indecently buried. It is only pity for the wasted years and efforts and sacrifice and loving devotion, that prevents our rejoicing that it has so openly certified its death as a revolutionary party and left us a little freer to carry on the work for which the Communist Party of the United States was founded. Browder has pledged himself to counter-revolution. We take this occasion to pledge ourselves anew to the proletarian revolution as the only real road to 'a peaceful, happy, prosperous and free America.'10

Finally, the I.L.L.A. has disputed the idea that American imperialism can be counted upon in a crisis to go to the aid of the Soviet Union; Big Business has always acted in terms of its own interests. Basically, it has more in common with Japanese imperialists than with the Soviet Union, against whom it would not hesitate to turn if the occasion should arise. The best way to help the Soviet Union, the I.L.L.A. has asserted is to build a strong, militant working class movement which can give genuine aid to the U.S.S.R., not only against Japan, but American imperialism as well.11

Trade Union Policies and Tactics.12 The general strategy of the C.P.

⁹Idem.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 6.

¹¹Workers Age, March 12, 1938, pp. 1,5.

¹²Workers Age, March 26, 1938, pp. 1,4,5; June 25, 1938, pp. 1,2,5; Aug. 13, 1938, pp. 1,2,3; Aug. 20, 1938, pp. 1, 2,3; Aug. 27, 1938, pp. 1,2,3, 4; Sept. 17, 1938, p. 6.

to which the I.L.L.A. has taken exception has been the former's policy of placing the politics of the Communist party ahead of the trade union needs of any particular industry and union. The I.L.L.A. has charged that in every union where the C.P. has gained a foothold, it has attempted to get the said organization to adopt resolutions supporting its foreign policy of "collective security", which policy the C.P. hopes, will save the Soviet Union from attack and possible destruction. Consequently, the I.L.L.A. has charged, every trade union has become a political center where the foreign policy of the Communist party takes precedence over the actual needs of the union.

" . . . The policies of the Communist Parties everywhere are today determined by the momentary needs and requirements of Soviet foreign policy. To further the particular foreign policy of the Soviet Union -- at the present moment the fraudulent theory of collective security -- the Communist Party seeks to secure domination of the trade unions and to undermine and destroy those trade union leaders who refuse to lend themselves to these policies. Even the splitting and destruction of unions which fail to yield to their pressure is thus not excluded."¹³

In order to make this strategy effective, the I.L.L.A. has further charged, the C.P. has resorted to the following tactics. It has: (1) Abandoned the class struggle in favor of popular frontism wherever collective security can be made the binding force; (2) made deals and bargains with the most reactionary trade union elements, giving them their unqualified support; (3) used unscrupulous tactics to repress all class-conscious minorities opposed to its political line; (4) attempted to break up any union which it has been unable to dominate.¹⁴

" . . . On one front after another, the labor movement is beginning to rid itself of the Stalinist venom that has penetrated it in the course of the past few years. This is a natural and entirely wholesome process. For Stalinism is an influence utterly alien to the labor movement and hostile to its best interests -- alien and hostile in its aim of establishing

¹³Workers Age, August 20, 1938, p. 4.

¹⁴Workers Age, Sept. 17, 1938, p. 6.

a stranglehold over the trade unions and subjecting them to a 'party line' imposed from the outside; alien and hostile in its methods of unscrupulous intrigue, double-dealing and gangsterism. Under cover of fine-sounding phrases about 'constructive work' and by operating thru individuals sometimes only dimly aware of their own role, Stalinist agents succeeded in working themselves into certain sections of the trade union movement, especially during the recent period of its great and sudden expansion. For a time, the toxin continued to spread. But, as in the human body so in the body of organized labor, the anti-toxin soon began to form. Gradually, aroused largely by what they themselves had seen of the results of Stalinist intrigue and domination, the more progressive, independent and responsible trade-unionists began to consider seriously how to save their organizations and to rid themselves of the plague infesting them. . . .¹⁵

"The fight against Stalinism is not at all a 'political, factional squabble', as some still believe. It is certainly not 'red-baiting' by any stretch of the imagination. It is a struggle for the very existence and future of the labor movement. It is a duty that falls upon everyone who has the vested interests of the labor movement at heart!"¹⁶

The United Workers Auto Union has presented an outstanding example of a union charged with Communist party disruption. In that union, the I.L.L.A. threw its support to Homer Martin in his struggles to oust the Communists from key positions in the organization.¹⁷

The I.L.L.A. has therefore concluded that all honest and progressive trade unionists must band together to break the control exercised over many unions by the Stalinists, and restore the trade unions to the path of militant class struggle organizations free from the domination and control of any single outside political organization.¹⁸

Labor Party. Members of the Lovestone group have accused the C.P. of employing the same tactics in the labor party as in trade unions generally. The I.L.L.A. has denied that the C.P. is interested in building a militant labor party based on the trade union movement in collaboration with farmer and middle class elements; instead, the C.P. is said to be interested in building an amorphous American People's Front based upon a program of col-

¹⁵Workers Age, Aug. 27, 1938, p. 4.

¹⁶Idem.

¹⁷Workers Age, June 25, 1938, pp. 1,2,5; Aug. 13, 1938, pp. 1,2,3; Aug. 20, 1938, pp. 1,2,3; Aug. 27, 1938, pp. 1,2,3,4.

¹⁸I.L.L.A., Where We Stand, p. 7.

lective security.¹⁹

¹⁹Workers Age, Aug. 27, 1938, pp. 3,6.

CHAPTER XXX

THE INDEPENDENT LABOR LEAGUE OF AMERICA -- CRITICISM OF SECOND (SOCIALIST) INTERNATIONAL

Summary Indictment of the Second International

Because of its Marxist-Leninist orientation, the criticism which the Lovestone-Brandler group has made of the Second International follows the general line originally laid down by the Third (Communist) International. It has rejected the fundamental idea underlying the Second International, that the transition from capitalism to socialism can be peacefully effected by utilization of the methods tolerated by the bourgeois-democratic state; it has regarded this concept as a departure from the fundamentals of Marxism.

"a) The Socialist Party (Social-Democracy) works on the basis of utilizing the bourgeois state, bourgeois democracy, and consequently, on the basis of capitalist economic order.

b) The social-democracy maintains the possibility of a peaceful transition to socialism within the framework of the bourgeois democratic republic, by means of bourgeois democratic methods; above all, by means of universal suffrage.

c) Since the social democracy thus protects the bourgeois state and the capitalist economic order, it actually is suppressing the class struggle of the workers. Wherever social-democratic parties are strong enough, they follow a policy of coalition with the bourgeois class, the bourgeois parties and the capitalists. To the social democracy the class struggle is only a phase; in reality it stands for class collaboration. The highest form taken by such class collaboration in the political field is the policy of coalition, cabinets which may be open or hidden, (toleration). In the economic field the Socialist Parties' class collaboration policies manifest themselves in support or toleration of reactionary and corrupt leaders, in fostering illusions or even giving active support to all sorts of capitalist substitutes for proletarian class struggle; for example, to implicit or tacit support of sundry capitalist economic or industrial democracy schemes.

d) The social democracy condemns the forceful armed seizure of power by the working class. At the same time, it supports the use of bourgeois force against the working class.

e) The Social democracy subordinates its foreign policy to that of the bourgeoisie of each country. Revolutionary proletarian internation-

alism is, therefore, impossible on the basis of social democracy.

f) Social democracy consequently has broken basically with the principles of revolutionary Marxism. It is a bourgeois workers' party."¹

Criticism of Socialist Party, U.S.A. -- Since 1936

The criticism made by the Lovestone-Brandler group of the Socialist Party, U.S.A. has varied with the changes occurring in that party. Prior to the secession of the Old Guard Socialists in 1936 when the latter controlled the Socialist party, the general criticism made followed that indicated above: the S.P. had abandoned Marxism in favor of social reformism.

Since 1936 when "Militant" Socialists gained control of the S.P., the general tenor of the criticism has changed somewhat in keeping with the party's alleged movement towards revolutionary socialism. Although the Lovestone group has conceded that the changes in the party have tended towards a sounder position, a number of fundamental criticisms are still made of the S.P.

Not a Party of Revolutionary Marxism. The I.L.L.A. has indicted the "new" Socialist party as one not a party of revolutionary Marxism, on two grounds: (1) The S.P. is affiliated with the Second International which has a reformist line and tradition. If the Socialist party intended to grow as a party of revolutionary Marxism, it should have severed its connections with the Second International and repudiated the latter's program and policies, the Lovestoneites have contended.² (2) The Socialist party, unlike the I.L.L.A., is an "all-inclusive" party. Its fundamental orientation is neither Marxism nor Marxism-Leninism. It has within its ranks members whose viewpoints are not identical with the Militant group, as the pacifist bloc, which is non-Marxian and non-revolutionary; even among the

¹Workers Age, July 1, 1934, p. 7.

²Workers Age, Nov. 1, 1934, p. 7.

Militants, the revolutionary Marxists are probably not in the majority.³ Although many Militants have professed to be followers of Marx and Lenin, there have been others who have regarded themselves as revolutionary socialists without necessarily embracing Marxism-Leninism, and still others whose socialism is dubiously revolutionary, as Norman Thomas,⁴ or out-and-out reformistic, as Daniel W. Hoan.⁵ A party with such diverse elements cannot lead the working class in its struggle to establish a Socialist society in the United States, the Lovestone group has held.

Basic Program Not Revolutionary. The CPO critically evaluated the Draft Program of the Socialist Party of the United States issued in September, 1935 by the Socialist Call Institute⁶ (this document constituted the Militant program for the Socialist party) and the Declaration of Principles adopted at the Cleveland Convention in 1936. Both were found wanting, as expressions of revolutionary Marxism. Regarding the Draft Program, the following conclusion was reached:

"There can be very little doubt that the 1935 program is a true reflection of a definite leftward movement that has been taking place in certain Militant circles in the past year. It appears, in fact, to be the expression of the more left of these elements, altho in essential points it is manifestly toned down and adapted to avoid offending too much of the political prejudices of the people at the right. This 'compromise' character of the document seems to be the chief source of its very serious shortcomings as a program for a revolutionary Marxist party.

"For, taken all in all, the Draft Program remains within the vicious circle of centrism. On the state, on the road to power and on war, it still attempts to occupy a position that is sharply distinct from the Old Guard, liberal reformism, but is not quite identical with the standpoint of revolutionary Socialism, that is, Communism. And this is symptomatic of the Militant movement as such. It too has attempted to break with the one without committing itself irrevocably to the other and so has remained stranded in between!

"But there can be no 'in between' fundamentally and in the long run.

³Workers Age, June 6, 1936, p. 4.

⁴Workers Age, Dec. 21, 1935, p. 4.

⁵Workers Age, April 18, 1936, p. 7.

⁶Workers Age, Nov. 16, 1935, pp. 1,3; Nov. 23, 1935, pp. 1,3.

There can be no middle course: it is either back to the moldy 'democratic Socialism' of the Old Guard, of Kautsky and Cahan, or else forward to the revolutionary Socialism of Marx and Lenin! And the choice must be made sooner rather than later for, here as everywhere, stagnation means retrogression!"⁷

Similarly, Lovestone contended that the Cleveland Convention of 1936 settled nothing in the Socialist party. The Old Guard Socialists were ousted. But the Militants themselves constituted a heterogeneous group who made concession after concession to the Wisconsin and other "right" socialists in order to keep the party together.⁸ Lovestone characterized the Declaration of Principles which emerged as "compounded confusion".⁹

The most significant criticisms made of the Socialist party (based on the Draft Program and the Declaration of Principles of the Cleveland Convention) fell chiefly under these categories: (1) nature of the State and the Road to Power; (2) position on a Labor party.

The Nature of the State and the Road to Power. The Lovestoneites charged that in the Draft Program of the Militants, there was a blurring of issues on the nature of democracy, the state, and the road to power: "bourgeois democracy" (class democracy) was not differentiated from the "democratic rights of workers"; the illusion that parliamentary democracy can have any meaning for workers was not dispelled.¹⁰ Nowhere did one find any reference to "dictatorship of the proletariat"; in its place was substituted a "workers and farmers government" which is not the equivalent of the proletarian dictatorship but "inevitably implies an effort to reject its political substance, to deny the basic teachings of Marxism on the state".¹¹

⁷Workers Age, Nov. 23, 1935, p. 3.

⁸Workers Age, June 6, 1936, pp. 1,3-4.

⁹Workers Age, June 13, 1936, p. 3.

¹⁰Workers Age, Nov. 16, 1935, p. 3.

¹¹Idem.

" . . . The concept of proletarian dictatorship carries within itself the revolutionary implication of the seizure of power thru the organized mass force of the toilers in direct clash with the existing regime, thru armed insurrection, in fact. But how about the 'workers and farmers government'? 'The working class', we read in the Draft Program, 'should prefer to come into power peacefully and democratically but that is an alternative which at best is unlikely.' A bold, forthright statement, indeed! . . ."¹²

Although the Declaration of Principles adopted by the Socialist party at the Cleveland Convention of 1936 restated its position, there was still lacking a clear-cut Marxian statement on the road to power, and a recognition of the need for a dictatorship of the proletariat, the C.P.O. charged.

Because of its opposition to the un-Communist position of the Socialist parties throughout the world on the question of the road to power, the CPO went down on record as opposed to all maneuvers to bring about a merger and organic unity of both organizations under one single Communist-Socialist International.¹³

Admission of Trotskyists into Party. Of even greater moment, the S.P. took within its ranks the "sect" of American Trotskyists which, alleged the C.P.O., was guilty of "pathological anti-Sovietism" and was engaged in "spreading its distilled venom in the ranks of the Socialist party".¹⁴ This group left no opportunity pass for attacking the Soviet Union and spreading "anti-Soviet lies" among the working class in the United States.¹⁵

Sectarian Attitude towards Labor Party. Prior to 1938, the Socialist party showed a lack of consistency¹⁶ as well as sectarianism in its attitude towards the question of a Labor party in the United States, the I.L.L.A. has maintained. The refusal of the S.P. to support the American

¹²Idem.

¹³Workers Age, June 15, 1935.

¹⁴Workers Age, Dec. 19, 1936, p. 2. (The Trotskyists were expelled from the Socialist party in 1937.)

¹⁵Idem.

¹⁶Workers Age, Sept. 12, 1936, p. 3.

Labor Party in 1936 on grounds that its standard-bearer, Roosevelt, was also a candidate of a capitalist party showed a lack of understanding on how labor parties grow. They do not spring up as full grown Marxian movements, but rather have imperfect beginnings. Those who see the need for a genuine labor party must enter such movements to give them guidance and direction, to help formulate their policies. One cannot stand aloof as did the Socialist Party and set forth conditions for "acceptability".¹⁷

" . . . How is the A.L.P. ever to become a 'genuine' labor party if the progressive elements, who want it to become such, are going to stay out? Sectarianism is always eager enough to declare itself ready to 'accept' the labor movement just as soon as the latter begins to measure up to its preconceived standards; meanwhile it is content with standing aside and offering gratuitous advice. It was against this type of sectarianism that Engels inveighed so scathingly over sixty years ago. . . ." ¹⁸

"In a word: within a few short months the Socialist Party has succeeded in manouvering itself into such a blind-alley of sectarianism and confusion that hostility to labor's first, halting steps towards political independence has become a dominant note in its campaign, that gross distortion of fundamental political facts and realities has become the very ground and basis of its election appeal!"¹⁹

Indecisive Position on Spanish Civil War: The I.L.L.A. contended that there was no unified, integrated point of view in the Socialist party on the Civil War in Spain. The Socialist Call advanced a position somewhat similar to that of the I.L.L.A. Norman Thomas, on the other hand, opposed the policies of the POUM which was supported by the Socialist Call. Prior to their expulsion, the Trotskyists advanced still another position. And so on.

"What, then is the political line of the Socialist Party -- the editorial in its official organ, the Socialist Call; the evasive pronouncements of Norman Thomas, its chairman; or the brazen political falsification of Sam Baron, its official emissary to Spain?"²⁰

¹⁷Workers Age, Oct. 10, 1936, p. 3.

¹⁸Idem.

¹⁹Idem.

²⁰Workers Age, June 26, 1937, p. 6.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE INDEPENDENT LABOR LEAGUE OF AMERICA -- CRITICISM OF THE TROTSKYIST MOVEMENT

Common Criticism of the Comintern

Despite their wide differences in orientation and approach, it is possible to indicate at the outset some basic criticisms which the Brandler-Lovestone group and the Trotskyists in common have made of the Communist International. These have centered about two main allegations: the bureaucratic centrism and absence of genuine party democracy in organizational matters; the departure from first principles in the theory and practice of Leninism.

In reviewing Trotsky's Revolution Betrayed (in which he took sharp issue with Trotsky on the latter's fundamental thesis) Bertram Wolfe nevertheless indicated some important aspects of this agreement:

"As prosecutor he scores many telling points against Stalin and his methods: the hero cult; organized sycophancy raised to a system; theoretical slipshodness and crudity of formulations; bureaucratic methods; decay and choking-off of inner party democracy and of the once vigorous life of the Soviets as governmental institutions; limiting discussion and 'self-criticism' to the criticism of opponents and the elimination of secondary evils, never permitting an examination of the 'infallible' leader, the omniscient and always correct Politbureau and the untouchable general line; fatal blunders in the policies dictated to the Communist International by its Russian leadership which have reduced the Comintern to a condition of self-defeating impotence."¹

Despite their objections to "Trotskyism", members of the Lovestone group have alleged that they never underrated Trotsky's invaluable contributions to the Russian Revolution. After the Revolution, however, they opposed him because of important, principled differences which arose.

¹New Republic (June 16, 1937), Vol. LXXXI, No. 1176, p. 164.

"Trotsky's services to the Russian revolution are undeniable. It is truly shameful to see how attempts have been made to rewrite the history of the years 1917 to 1920 in such fashion as to omit the heroic pages that Trotsky inscribed there. To such depths does petty, shameless factionalism lead, to falsification of historical truth, to brazen forgery!"²

3

Criticism of the Trotskyists -- Prior to 1937

Backgrounds. The relationship of the CPO leadership to the Trotskyists has always been one of principled opposition, the former has alleged. Lovestone has maintained that he was among the first to demand the removal of Trotsky from the Comintern.

"It might interest you to know that at the full meeting of the executive committee of the Communist International, held in Moscow in July, 1927, Thaelmann and I were elected to meet a sub-committee of the Political Bureau consisting of Stalin and Bucharin, to demand that the Russian party expel Trotsky forthwith. It might likewise interest your readers to know that Stalin was then most adamant in his opposition to the expulsion of Trotsky from the C.P.S.U."⁴

The following year, the American Trotskyists (Cannon and others) were expelled from the C.P. in the campaign against Trotskyism which was being waged by the Lovestone leadership of the Communist party.⁵ Lovestone himself said in referring to the Trotskyists, "The Party under its present leadership, has been among the first sections of the Communist International in combatting deviations from the Leninist line. . . ."⁶

Bertram Wolfe, however, has narrated that in 1929, as a member of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, he voted against the proposed deportation of Trotsky.⁷

²Wolfe, Things We Want to Know, p. 19.

³Criticism of the Trotskyist position is found throughout the writings of the Lovestone-Brandler group. But for the most extended accounts see Communist Party of United States (Opposition), Where We Stand, Vol. II, pp.22-31.

⁴New York Times, Feb. 14, 1937, Sect. IV, p. 8.

⁵Lovestone, Pages from Party History, p. 16. Wolfe, The Trotsky Opposition, passim.

⁶Lovestone, op. cit., p. 16.

⁷Wolfe, Things We Want to Know, p. 20.

" . . . The writer of these lines, when serving as a representative to the Executive Committee of the Communist International in 1929, on being asked to express his opinion on the proposed deportation of Trotsky, recorded his vote against it. (To my chagrin I learned that Trotsky had already been secretly deported at the time the sham 'consultative vote' was being taken)."⁸

It will be impossible to give an exhaustive presentation of the criticisms made by the International Communist Opposition of the Trotskyists. Only the major issues will be presented; for other details the reader is referred in the footnotes. The main differences between the two groups centered about: Trotsky's Thermidorian Conception of the Soviet State; his theory of permanent revolution; his call for a Fourth International. Arising from these were secondary issues which will also be discussed.

Thermidorian Theory a Departure from Fundamentals. The ICO quoted Trotsky to the effect that the U.S.S.R. is no longer a proletarian dictatorship but a "bureaucratic dictatorship" which is proletarian "only in its property relations".⁹ This, the essence of Thermidor, was categorically rejected by the Lovestone-Brandler group which characterized such a conception as a departure from fundamentals of Communism.¹⁰

" . . . However shamefully the Stalin leadership has misused the apparatus of the Soviet State for factional purposes, nevertheless the Communist Party of the Soviet Union remains a Communist Party, the soviet state a proletarian government both in property relations and class rule, and while we are seeking to correct its errors and restore inner party democracy, this does not for a moment justify a false analysis of the class character of that state; nor an attempt to build a rival party in Russia, which can only be built in actual struggle and which threatens the unity of the proletariat and the existence of the dictatorship itself; nor the conduct of strikes against the workers' government."¹¹

" . . . The viewpoint of Trotskyism is wrong in theory and is contradicted by the most obvious facts in the recent history of the U.S.S.R. (Socialist construction, etc.) and in international politics (attitude of the imperialist powers to the Soviet Union). It is this fundamentally

⁸ Idem.

⁹ Wolfe, What is the Communist Opposition? p. 44.

¹⁰ Idem.

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 44-45.

wrong estimation of the class character of the Soviet State (and the consequences: the two party system in the USSR, the fomenting of strikes in the USSR, the slogan of secret ballot, etc.) that constitutes the crucial deviation of Trotskyism from the principles of Communism."¹²

A consequence of Thermidor, the International Communist Opposition maintained, was the necessity of forming another political party within the U.S.S.R. whose unique function must ultimately be to foment civil war in order to overthrow the Stalin leadership of the Soviet Union. It was the contention of the Lovestone-Brandler group that, for all its mistakes and errors, the existing party was basically sound; that a second party would be calamitous because it would result in civil war and would furnish fascist powers with an opportunity for destroying the Soviet Union.¹³

Socialism Can Be Built in One Country. The ICO characterized Trotsky's belief in the impossibility of building socialism in one country as "an old Trotskyist error" which went back to the days preceding the November revolution.¹⁴ To maintain that socialism was not being built in the Soviet Union in the light of the tremendous pace at which socialist construction was proceeding, it alleged, was to fly in the face of facts. The Soviet Union was held up as a living example of how socialism could be built in a single country.¹⁵

"The dogmatic rejection of the possibility of 'building up Socialism in one country' is an old Trotskyist error. . . . In its latest form it represents a profound disbelief in the possibility of the Soviet Union's building up Socialism on the basis of its own economic resources and class forces.

"In the first years of the Russian Revolution, the situation was so desperate in Russia (breakdown as the result of war, famine, revolution and counter-revolution and foreign invasion) and the revolution seemed so imminent in Germany and other Western lands, that there was and could be no thought of building socialism in a temporarily isolated Russia. The

¹²Communist Party of United States (Opposition), Where We Stand, Vol. II, p.23.

¹³Wolfe, op. cit., pp. 45-46, 49. Lovestone, Soviet Foreign Policy and World Revolution, pp. 24-25.

¹⁴Wolfe, op. cit., p. 41. Communist Party of United States (Opposition), Where We Stand, Vol. II, p. 25.

¹⁵Wolfe, op. cit., pp. 41-42. Lovestone, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

only thought was to hold on a little longer until the revolution should break out in the west. But in the early 20's, when it became apparent that capitalism was being stabilized and that there would be a shorter or longer period when the two systems would exist side by side without either for the moment being able to overthrow the other, then it became necessary to canvass the possibility of doing something else beside just holding out -- namely using the vast and varied resources and revolutionary initiative of the Russian masses and Russian land for the building of socialism as long as peace should last. In this respect the Central Committee, and after its disruption Stalin and his group, in spite of various crudities of formulation and blunders in detail, have been correct, and Trotsky's fiercely eloquent but empty phrases about not 'socialism in one country' but 'world revolution', served only to cloak a purely negative and defeatist pessimism as to the possibility of building socialism.¹⁶

Further, the International Communist Opposition denied that there was any essential conflict between the interests of the Soviet Union and the world proletariat; likewise it rejected the idea that building socialism in the U.S.S.R. was incompatible with revolutionary Marxism.¹⁷

"The Trotskyite theory that there is a fundamental cleavage between the interests of 'Russian state policy' and the interests of the international proletariat is false from top to bottom. . . ."¹⁸

" . . . There is no such question as to 'which comes first', the defense of the Soviet Union or the revolutionary struggles inside any particular country. The two are distinct but inseparable phases of one organic task: the defeat of the international bourgeoisie. A successful defense of the Soviet Union by the C.P.S.U. helps the revolutionary labor movement in the capitalist countries, that is, a rising revolutionary proletarian movement is the best defense of the U.S.S.R. by the non-Russian workers."¹⁹

Finally, the Lovestone-Brandler group contended, Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution betrayed a fundamental error in his analysis and underestimation of the role of the peasantry. Fearing that an alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry was impossible in the Soviet Union, he found it necessary to turn to the world proletariat as the main support of

¹⁶ Wolfe, op. cit., pp. 41-42.

¹⁷ Communist Party of United States (Opposition), Where We Stand, Vol. I, pp. 20, 33. Lovestone, op. cit., pp. 10, 27.

¹⁸ Lovestone, op. cit., p. 27.

¹⁹ Idem.

the Soviet Union. In this he was mistaken.²⁰

"Here, as elsewhere, Trotskyism camouflages its pessimism as to the forces of the revolution under a left-sounding cloak -- in this case employing the famous Marxian term of 'the revolution in permanence' to cover a thoroughly un-Marxian picture of the course of the revolution."²¹

A Fourth International Unnecessary. Even admitting, for purposes of argument, the soundness of Trotsky's criticism of the Stalin bureaucracy and also its deviation from the principles of Marxism-Leninism as evidenced, for example, by the People's Front policies, the International Communist Opposition was nevertheless opposed to the formation of a Fourth International. It believed that a healthy opposition to the policies of Stalin already existed within the Third International, and that if these sentiments were given time to crystalize and become articulate, the hand of the Stalin leadership would be forced back in the direction of a correct Marxist-Leninist line, from which it had so manifestly departed.

Heinrich Brandler, speaking for the Bureau of the International Communist Opposition, emphatically stated his opposition to the Trotskyist Fourth International:

"Just as urgently as it is necessary to get under way an international co-operation of all forces that have remained loyal to Marxism and Leninism in the struggle against the reformist policy which the Second and the Third International are jointly practicing now, just as necessary is it to fight against the anti-Bolshevist, Trotskyist idea of a new International. What we advocate is a reorganization and a revival of the Communist International on a basis of communist principles and inner-party democracy with equal, but not predominant participation of the CPSU. . . ."²²

Speaking for the American section of the ICO, Lovestone similarly expressed himself:

"Nationally and internationally, our organization is categorically opposed to the Fourth International. We are today, as we were before the recent Moscow trials, for the reconstruction and reunification of the Third International on the basis of a return to Communist principles, a restora-

²⁰ Wolfe, op. cit., p. 43.

²¹ Idem.

²² Workers Age, June 12, 1937, p. 3.

tion of party democracy and the establishment of a genuine, collective, international leadership."²³

At an earlier date, opposition to a Fourth International was also put on other grounds: Trotsky's demand for a Fourth International would attract to its ranks dissatisfied adherents of the Second International who otherwise might have gone over to the Third International but who were somewhat reluctant to go the entire way. The result would be a Second-and-a-Half International with a centrist tendency rather than a fighting revolutionary Marxian organization.²⁴

" . . . Thus Trotsky becomes the main rallying point for the new centrism and his views and efforts to organize a new international become a serious obstacle in the way of the rehabilitation of the world Communist movement and in the way of the emergence of a genuine left movement from the Second International to Communism."²⁵

Trotsky a Former Supporter of Popular Frontism. Despite the clamor of the Trotskyists against the Popular Front, the Lovestone-Brandler group accused Trotsky of having first espoused the Popular Front orientation. It was Trotsky, they alleged, who first demanded a Peoples Front for fascist and bourgeois-democratic countries. Two excerpts were quoted from his writings to sustain this contention: an article which appeared in the "Trotskyite press" for July, 1933, entitled, "Fascism and Democratic Slogans"; and another, "The Situation in Europe", which appeared in La Verite, No. 180.²⁶ The Communist Party Opposition alleged that herein were found the arguments advanced by the Comintern for the People's Front. From this it concluded:

"If today Trotsky indignantly flays the people's front policy it simply proves, once again, that he possesses a remarkably bad memory for

²³ Lovestone, New York Times, Feb. 14, 1937, Sect. IV, p. 8.

²⁴ Wolfe, op. cit., pp. 46-48.

²⁵ Wolfe, op. cit., p. 48.

²⁶ Workers Age, April 10, 1937, p. 4.

his own political utterances. The conception which Trotsky advances in 1933 shows that he does not object to the people's front policy of the CI from a standpoint of Marxian-Leninist principles. Trotsky's struggles against the CI is completely unprincipled. Such it was formerly, such it is today."²⁷

" . . . Trotsky propagated what today is called the people's front policy. Today he is against the People's Front policy.

"Trotsky's behavior shows that his political vociferations do not depend on whether the CI is right or wrong but that, due to his anti-bolshevik attitude towards the Soviet Union and the CPSU he is constantly striving to say something which is as much in contrast to the policy of the CI as is possible. The result is that his conclusions contradict themselves at least as much as the diverse turns of the CI. . . ."²⁸

The "French Turn". The International Communist Opposition saw no justification for the so-called "French turn" of the Trotskyists, i. e., their entering the Socialist party in France and elsewhere from which they were subsequently expelled. This was regarded by the Lovestone-Brandler group as further evidence of the break of the Trotskyists with Marxist-Leninist fundamentals.²⁹

"Precisely at the moment that such deep changes are taking places within the official Communist movement, precisely at the moment that the struggle for the rehabilitation of the C.I. has definitely reached a new stage, the Trotskyites, having lost all hope in the Third International now fix their aspirations upon the Second and are everywhere taking steps to liquidate themselves into the Socialist and Centrist parties. Thereby they definitely signalize their break with world Communism so that in the future their influence upon the development of our movement will be entirely external."³⁰

Trotskyism an Extreme Sectarian Movement. The Lovestone-Brandler group contended that the Trotskyists were guilty of sectarianism as the official Communist party ever was even at the height of its Third Period madness. The Lovestoneites asserted that Trotsky made the Russian question the pivotal point about which his other doctrines revolved. As a result,

²⁷ Workers Age, April 10, 1937, p. 6.

²⁸ Idem.

²⁹ Wolfe, Things We Want to Know, p. 20. Communist Party (Opposition), Where We Stand, Vol. IV, pp. 11, 30. Workers Age, Oct. 15, 1934, pp. 4,7.

³⁰ Communist Party (Opposition), Where We Stand, Vol. IV, p. 30.

his evaluations of the best strategy and tactics to be pursued by the Communist International were unreliable, unsound, and, above all, sectarian.³¹

Nowhere in his writings, alleged the ICO, did one find any indications of the need for a different approach in different sections of the Communist International (i.e. "exceptionalism").³²

"The boasted 'internationalism' of Trotskyist faction is exactly the same type of distorted internationalism that characterizes the Stalin system of international leadership. Trotsky like Stalin makes the essence of his faction the mobilization of the Communist International on the basis of the program of one faction of the Russian Party. Not a system of real collective international leadership for the Comintern but the conversion of the Comintern into a tail-end of a Russian faction (in this case: the international Trotskyist oppositions into a tail-end to the Russian Trotskyist faction) -- this is the program of Trotskyism. A system such as this condemns the international Trotskyist movement to inevitable sectarianism."³³

"Trotskyism attempts to preserve the appearance of internationalism by an attack on the so-called doctrine of 'national socialism'. Trotsky pretends that Stalin is in favor of 'Socialism in one country' while he, Trotsky, is in favor of 'Socialism in all countries'.

"Thus Trotskyism tries to preserve the appearance of genuine internationalism for his international apparatus developed on the basis of and for the sake of factional struggle in the Russian party. Neither faction has any use for the principle of adaptation and modification of the general line to the specific and concrete conditions of the various countries. This view is branded as 'exceptionalism' by Stalin, as 'national socialism' by Trotsky. . . ."³⁴

"The very method of formation of the Trotskyist faction reveals its incurable sectarianism. Its groups in the various countries have nothing to say on the problems of the masses in the country in question. They have a fixed credo, a memorized and invariable litany which they recite on all occasions, to all questioners, as the solution of all problems. . . .

"In other words, the formation of the Trotskyist groups in each country and on a world scale takes place not on the burning questions on which the movement should be built and to which answers must be found, but on the basis of the points of difference (mostly outlived) on which Trotsky differed from the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. These questions form a closed system of ritualistic dogmas without any regard to their actuality or to their present direct relation to the vital

³¹ Wolfe, What is the Communist Party Opposition? pp. 40-41. Communist Party of the United States (Opposition), Where We Stand, Vol. II, p. 27.

³² Wolfe, op. cit., p. 41.

³³ Communist Party of United States (Opposition), Where We Stand, Vol. II, p. 27.

³⁴ Wolfe, op. cit., p. 41.

questions of the revolutionary movement. This doctrinal sectarianism could not produce anything but a doctrinaire sect."³⁵

Spanish Civil War. The position taken by the Trotskyists in Spain in opposing the policies of the P.O.U.M. was given as another example of its sectarianism.³⁶ The Lovestone-Brandler group, on the other hand, contended that the P.O.U.M. constituted the only true revolutionary Marxian party in Spain, and that all Marxists should have rallied to its support.³⁷

Political Relations With Trotskyists. In the early days following the expulsion of both the Trotsky and the Lovestone groups from the Communist party, the Lovestoneites, in their desire for a re-united Communist movement, indicated their willingness to have the Trotskyists re-instated into the C.P. if they gave up the Thermidorian conception of the Soviet state, which was alleged to be a deviation from Marxism-Leninism on a fundamental question. Otherwise differences not going to the roots of Communism should be tolerated within the party, the Lovestoneites conceded.³⁸

The advocacy of the Fourth International by the Trotskyists, however, made organic unity out of the question. Nevertheless the Lovestone-Brandler group recognized the Trotskyists as class-conscious workers who were in agreement with them on many questions regarding the nature of the capitalist system and some of the immediate steps to be taken for the amelioration of the conditions of the working class. It therefore favored united front agreements with the Trotskyists wherever such joint action was possible. It contended, nevertheless, that the Trotskyists were averse to such action

³⁵Ibid., pp. 39-40.

³⁶Workers Age, Aug. 7, 1937, p. 4. Wolfe, Civil War in Spain, pp. 67-73.

³⁷Workers Age, July 24, 1937, pp. 2,6; Nov. 6, 1937, pp. 1,2,4. Wolfe, op. cit., pp. 46-48.

³⁸Wolfe, What is the Communist Opposition? p. 52. Communist Party of United States, (Opposition), Where We Stand, Vol. II, p. 29.

with them.³⁹

"While fusions or organizational unity is out of the question, the question of blocs or agreements on specific questions or in specific fields of the class struggle is an entirely different matter. We are in favor of such blocs and agreements with the Trotskyites as with other working class elements, on the basis of partial programs corresponding to the needs of the class struggle. Characteristically enough, however, the Trotskyites, true to their sectarian prejudices, have quite a different view on this question."⁴⁰

But despite this avowed desire for a broad united front with all working class organizations, the Lovestone group was wary lest it antagonize the Communist party, with whom it was attempting to achieve organic unity (on a "principled basis") above everything else, prior to 1937.

"We must intensify our united front activities. United front actions with impotent sects (AWP, Trotskyites, etc.) are of no special value, since they do not serve to set any masses in motion to struggle against employers and do not help attain revolutionary unity. Furthermore, we must be on guard against such united fronts giving the appearance of being anti-CP blocs. We must rather move the center of gravity of our united front actions towards mass organizations (trade unions, fraternal organizations) and towards some significant political organizations (C.P. and S.P.)."⁴¹

Criticism of the Trotskyists -- Since 1937

Although the Trotskyists and Lovestoneites have been in general agreement upon the bankruptcy of People's Frontism, many differences still continue to exist. The I.L.L.A. has found it necessary to take the Trotskyists to task on several matters. It has accused them of factional bias and sectarianism, as exemplified by their early intransigent attitude towards the labor party, and the Ludlow resolution calling for a popular referendum on war. It commended their subsequent reversal on both questions.¹ The I.L.L.A. has also condemned their refusal to support the Keep America Out of

³⁹Communist Party of United States (Opposition), op. cit., pp. 30-31.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 31.

⁴¹Workers Age, July 15, 1934, p. 5.

¹Workers Age, Oct. 8, 1938, p. 3.

War Committee's six-point program; the latter's fundamental anti-collective security orientation is sound, even if not thoroughly Marxian.²

The I.L.L.A. has also indicated that it ill behooves the Trotskyists to gloat over the reversal made by the Lovestoneites of their position on the Moscow Trials. The I.L.L.A. has reminded them that Trotsky at one time also condoned the Menshevik trials in 1931 where the evidence of guilt was no more substantial.³

In recent years, many of the disagreements on theoretical questions between Lovestoneites and Trotskyites have disappeared. In spite of this, differences on the strategy and tactics of everyday work (in the labor movement, for example) have been so great that the two organizations have found it difficult to agree even upon united front activities on specific issues. Actual organizational unity has appeared to be entirely out of the question.⁴

²Workers Age, March 26, 1938.

³Workers Age, June 11, 1938, p. 4.

⁴Workers Age, March 15, 1938, p. 4.

PART VI

THE TROTSKYIST MOVEMENT

CHAPTER XXXII

THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY -- HISTORY

Brief History

Russian Backgrounds. The history of the International Left Opposition and the Fourth International dates back to the period of Lenin's illness and death in 1923, at which time organized opposition within the Central Committee of the Communist Party, U.S.S.R., and in the Communist International itself began to take definite form and shape. Leon Trotsky, leader of the movement, severely arraigned the elected successors of Lenin, a triumvirate, consisting of Stalin, Zinoviev and Kamenev, for their bureaucratic control of the party, their abandonment of workers' democracy and their position on principled issues facing the Soviet Union.¹ Trotsky nevertheless expressed a minority viewpoint on the Central Committee. He was dismissed from his post as War Commissar in 1924. In 1927, the Fifteenth Congress of the Communist Party, U.S.S.R., passed resolutions calling for the expulsion of the Opposition. In January, 1928, following his expulsion from the party, Trotsky was exiled to Central Asia, near the Chinese frontier. The following year he was forcibly deported to Turkey. Since 1929, he has been living in exile (now in Mexico); he has continued to keep his point of view and differences with the Stalin regime before the interna-

¹ Heisler, The First Two Moscow Trials, pp. 116-130. Schachtman, Ten Years -- History and Principles of the Left Opposition, p. 11. Trotsky, The Third International After Lenin, Appendix, p. 314.

²
tional proletariat. He has also been active in the organization of the Fourth International.

Expulsion of Trotskyists from C.P., U.S.A. The ousting of the Left Opposition from the Russian section of the Comintern led to similar action throughout the world. In 1928, Cannon, Swabeck, Abhern, Schachtman, all members of the Central Committee, C.P., U.S.A., and other followers of Trotsky, were expelled from the American Communist Party.³ Trotsky's followers in the United States soon developed discordant viewpoints. From the Communist League of America, the official Trotskyist movement, two significant splits occurred, the Communist League of Struggle, led by Albert Weisbord and the League for Revolutionary Workers Party, under the leadership of B.J. Field. Both repudiated, and in turn were repudiated,⁴ by Trotsky.

Early Objective. From 1928 until 1934, the Communist League of America constituted an Opposition to the official Communist party rather than an independent political force. Its objective, in common with all adherents of the International Left Opposition, was to reform the official party by pressure from without.⁵

Formation of Workers Party. By 1934, sensing futility in the task of correcting the line of the Comintern in accordance with its own principles, strategy and tactics, the Communist League of America abandoned its position as an Opposition and entered into negotiations with the American Workers Party,

²Trotsky, My Life, passim; Third International After Lenin, Appendix, pp. 314-315.

³Trotsky, The Third International After Lenin, Appendix, p. 330. Socialist Appeal, Oct. 22, 1938, pp. 1,6.

⁴Discussed infra.

⁵Trotsky, What Next? pp. 184-185.

an outgrowth of the Conference for Progressive Labor Action, for a merger of the two movements and the launching of a new Marxian party, subsequently known as the Workers Party of the United States.⁶

Entrance into Socialist Party. In 1936, the Workers Party of the United States, after more than a year of revolutionary activity upon the American scene, began to weigh the possibilities of merging its forces once more, this time with the Socialist party. In June, 1936, after much negotiation, the union was consummated. The National Committee of the Workers Party of the United States, issued an order of dissolution, which read in part:

"At the last convention, the National Committee of the Workers Party was instructed to follow closely the developments within the Socialist Party and was given full power to take appropriate action in the event of a favorable outcome of the internal struggle. By virtue of this authority, the National Committee herewith decides to dissolve the Workers Party as a separate organization and calls upon all its members to enter the ranks of the Socialist Party of America. It appeals to all revolutionary workers to follow this example.

"The comrades who have been grouped in the Workers Party join not as a separate faction, and take their places side by side with the militant fighters in the ranks of the S.P. with the aim of building it into a mass party of revolutionary socialism. We aim to work loyally and devotedly in the ranks of the Socialist Party and to observe discipline in action. We enter the Socialist Party as we are, with our ideas. We assume all the obligations and duties of party membership and ask no special privileges. On the basis of equal duties and equal rights we obligate ourselves to work loyally and devotedly to build the Socialist Party into a powerful, united organization in the revolutionary struggle for socialism."⁷

Not all members of the Workers party were in accord with the dissolution. A small section, the "Oehler Group", bitterly opposed it. They have continued to remain an independent Marxian league, known as the Revolutionary Workers League.⁸

⁶Socialist Appeal, Oct. 22, 1938, p. 5. "Prospects for a New Party in America," New International (Sept.-Oct., 1934), Vol. I, No. 3, pp. 65-67.

^{*}"The Workers Party is Founded," New International (Dec., 1934), Vol. I, No. 5, pp. 129-130.

⁷New Militant, June 6, 1936, p. 1. (Last issue of the official weekly newspaper of the Workers Party of the U.S.)

⁸Discussed infra.

Expulsion from Socialist Party. From June, 1936 until August, 1937, the Trotskyists have alleged, they acted as loyal members of the Socialist party, assuming their share of responsibilities, participating in the formation of policies, and subjecting themselves to party discipline. In the early part of August, 1937, beginning in New York City, they were summarily and unjustifiably expelled from the Socialist party on flimsy and trumped-up charges of violating party discipline, they have declared. The basis for their expulsion, they have further averred, was not any principled difference with the S.P.; the bureaucratic leaders of the latter organization feared the loss of their positions and their control over the party because the Trotskyists were showing the membership by their activity, militancy and correct analyses that they deserved to be elevated to positions of leadership and trust, something which could be done only at the expense of the existing bureaucracy.⁹ The Trotskyists thereupon reissued their theoretical organ, the Socialist Appeal, as a weekly paper, and urged the Left-Wing of the party to fight the expulsions.¹⁰

Although the National Executive Committee of the S.P. subsequently declared, in effect, that the expulsions had been illegal, and offered to take back all expelled Trotskyists except the top leadership, the Trotskyists had proceeded too far with their plans for launching a new party in the interim to retreat. Instead of returning, they urged the adherents of the Left wing to leave the S.P. and join with them in the formation of a new party. A convention of Trotskyists was held in Chicago several months later (Dec. 31, 1937-Jan. 3, 1938), and a new "mass revolutionary party",

⁹ Socialist Appeal, Aug. 14, 1937, pp. 1,8.

¹⁰ Idem.

the Socialist Workers party, was formally established.¹¹

The S.W.P. attached great significance to the timeliness of its organization. It believed that a new party based upon the principles of Bolshevik-Leninism was necessary in the United States; it proposed to serve that important function as an affiliate of the Fourth International.

"The Socialist Workers Party, unfurling the banner of the Fourth International from the hour of its birth, has no rival in the field. It is the only revolutionary party, the heir of the rich traditions of the past and the herald of the future."¹²

The Fourth International

Although the Fourth International was formally launched in 1938,¹ its historical antecedents went back ten years into the past. Trotsky has indicated that " . . . the pre-history of the Fourth International properly falls into three stages. . . ."² The first of these extended from 1923 until 1933; the second was the period in which the Trotskyists attempted to make the socialist parties the vehicle for their revolutionary activities; the third was ushered in by the formation of the Fourth International.³

1923-1933. Trotsky's espousal of a Fourth International proved to be the culmination of his inability to correct the alleged abuses of the Third International through the channels of external criticism. As he has observed in his autobiography and elsewhere, the activities of the Left Opposition during these years were directed towards unity by inner reform

¹¹Socialist Workers Party, Declaration of Principles and Constitution, p. 19. "The Convention of the New Party," New International (Jan., 1938), Vol. IV, No. 1, pp. 4-6. Cannon, "The New Party Is Founded," New International (Feb., 1938), Vol. IV, No. 2, pp. 41-42. Socialist Appeal, Jan. 8, 1938, pp. 1-3; Jan. 15, 1938, passim.

¹²Cannon, op. cit., p. 42.

¹Trotsky, My Life, p. 558.

²Trotsky, "A Great Achievement," New International (Oct., 1938) Vol. IV, No. 10, p. 294.

³Idem.

of the policies of the Comintern and those of the C.P., U.S.S.R.

" . . . The policy of the opposition has nothing to do with preparation for an armed struggle. We are guided wholly by a conviction of the profound vitality and elasticity of the Soviet regime. Our course is one of inner reform."⁴

" . . . The struggle for the restoration of the unity of the Communist ranks must be combined with the struggle against the ideological decay and falsehood of Stalinism.

"This is the task of the Left Opposition. . . ."⁵

"It would be a criminal act on the part of the Opposition Communists to take, . . . to the road of creating a new Communist party, before making some serious efforts to change the course of the old party. . . . To create a new Communist party is a gigantic task. . . .

"Within the party, nuclei of Bolshevik-Leninists must be created. On their banner they must inscribe: change the course and reform the party regime. . . ."⁶

1933-1938. About 1933, after the surrender of the Communist party of Germany to Hitler, Trotsky abandoned this position.⁷ It became evident to him that the theory, strategy and tactics of the Third International were steadily moving away from what he regarded to be the sound position for revolutionary Marxism to take. It also became apparent that the International Left Opposition was unable to make any substantial headway against those in whose hands the destinies of the Third International lay.

"While we are fighting with all our strength for the rebirth of the Comintern and the continuity of its further development, we are least of all inclined to any fetishism of form. The fate of the proletarian world revolution stands, for us, above the organizational fate of the Comintern. Should the worst variant materialize; should the present official parties, despite all our efforts, be led to a collapse by the Stalinist bureaucracy; should it mean in a certain sense to begin all over again, then the new International will trace its genealogy from the ideas and cadres of the Communist Left Opposition."⁸

Since 1933, Trotsky has been staunch in his advocacy of the Fourth

⁴Trotsky, My Life, p. 562.

⁵Trotsky, The Spanish Revolution in Danger, p. 36.

⁶Trotsky, What Next? p. 185.

⁷Socialist Appeal, Oct. 22, 1938, p. 3.

⁸Trotsky, The Only Road, p. 91.

International, which he has held indispensable to the realization of the principles of Marxism-Leninism, the reorganization of the Communist party of the U.S.S.R., and the salvation of the international proletariat.

"The problem of the world revolution as well as the problem of the Soviet Union may be summed up in one and the same brief formula: The Fourth International."⁹

Trotsky has especially maintained that the struggle against imperialist war can be carried out only by a new international party; the Second and Third Internationals have conclusively established their bankruptcy in the eyes of the Left Opposition. The coming world war must find one organization which can give the international working class the necessary leadership for the great struggle which awaits it.¹⁰

"At its first blow the imperialist war will smash the decrepit spine of the Second International and will split its national sections into bits. It will reveal to the bottom the hollowness and impotence of the Third International. But then neither will it spare all those indecisive centrist groupings which evade the problem of the International, which seek purely national roots, do not carry any one question to its conclusion, are devoid of perspective and temporarily feed on the ferment and confusion of the working class."

" . . . The struggle against war means now the struggle for the Fourth International!"¹¹

" . . . We are strangers to adventurism in any form. We are not talking about proclaiming in an artificial manner the existence of the Fourth International, but of preparing for it systematically. By the test of events, we must show and demonstrate to the advanced workers that the programs and methods of the two existing Internationals are in insurmountable contradiction to the requirements of the proletarian revolution, and that the contradictions will not grow less but will, on the contrary, continually increase. From this analysis flows the only possible general line: we must, theoretically and practically, prepare for the Fourth International."¹²

⁹Trotsky, The Soviet Union and the Fourth International, p. 31.

¹⁰James, World Revolution, 1917-1936, pp. 405-421.

¹¹International Communist League, War and the Fourth International, p. 35.

¹²Trotsky, Whither France? p. 113.

Launching the Fourth International.¹³ Although the first call for a new international was made in 1935,¹⁴ the actual organization was delayed for several years. The First World Congress of the Fourth International met "in strictest illegality 'somewhere in Switzerland' on September 3, 1938".¹⁵ Although about thirty or more sections had been affiliated to the movement, only some thirty delegates representing eleven countries found it expedient or possible to be present at this historic meeting.¹⁶

The Congress adopted a Central Thesis -- a Revolutionary Transitional Program -- a Manifesto Against Imperialist War, and Resolutions covering the basic aspects of the principles, strategy and tactics of the Fourth International.¹⁷ Although these will be presented in the pages which follow, the following were among the most significant proposals adopted:

Condemnation of the People's Front orientation; denial of "democracy versus fascism" as the correct formulation of the international proletarian issue; condemnation of imperialist wars; recognition that the main enemy of the working class is its own bourgeoisie; advocacy of war referendum; defense of the Soviet Union against foreign invasion and attacks, but not its Stalin leadership; a program of immediate demands for the working class, the peasantry and the colonial peoples, including: a program of public works, the right to work, minimum wage laws, decent living conditions, and a sliding scale of working hours; adoption of measures to provide for

¹³Socialist Appeal, Oct. 22, 1938, passim; Nov. 5, 1938, p. 2. "The Fourth International Meets," New International (Sept., 1938), Vol. IV, No. 9, p. 278. Trotsky, "A Great Achievement," New International (Oct., 1938), Vol. IV, No. 10, pp. 293-294. Schachtman, "The Fourth International is Launched," New International (Nov., 1938), Vol. IV, No. 11, pp. 325-327.

¹⁴New Militant, Aug. 3, 1935, pp. 1, 3.

¹⁵Socialist Appeal, Oct. 22, 1938, pp. 1, 3.

¹⁶Idem.

¹⁷Socialist Appeal, Oct. 22, 1938.

the defense and relief for victims of Nazi and Stalinist persecutions:
the taking of diverse steps towards the creation of a workers' and farmers' government (proletarian dictatorship) by: arming the proletariat, providing military training for workers under their own auspices and leadership, establishment of "strike pickets" and workers' defense guards, and the setting up of factory committees as a prelude to workers soviets.¹⁸

¹⁸ Idem.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY -- PRINCIPLES OF MARXISM

As regards Marxian fundamentals, the Trotskyists have declared their adherence to the principles of Lenin's State and Revolution, and have affirmed that their analysis of the state, democracy, fascism and war are in accord with the approach there set forth.

The State¹

The Marxist-Leninist view of the state as the instrument of a dominant, ruling class to manage and administer the political affairs of that class, to maintain its hegemony, and to exploit all other classes in society was advanced.

"In any society, the real power is held by those who own and control the means whereby that society lives, the instruments of production, distribution and communication. In capitalist society, such ownership and control is held and exercised by the big bourgeoisie, by the bankers and industrialists. . . . The state or government, far from representing the general interests of society as a whole, is in the last analysis simply the political instrument through which the owning class exercises and maintains its power, enforces the property relations which guarantee its privileges, and suppresses the working class. In these essential functions all of the organs and institutions of the state power co-operate -- the bureaucracy, the courts, police, prisons, and the armed forces. The particular political forms of capitalist society (monarchy, democracy, military, dictatorship, fascism) in no way affect the basic social dictatorship of the controlling minority, and are only the different means through which that dictatorship expresses itself. The belief that in such a country as the United States we live in a free, democratic society in which fundamental economic change can be effected by persuasion, by education, by legal and purely parliamentary methods, is an illusion. In the United States, as in all capitalist nations, we live in actuality under a dictatorship; and the possibilities for purely legal and constitutional

¹Goldman, What is Socialism? pp. 31-34. Socialist Workers Party, Declaration of Principles and Constitution, pp. 6-9.

change are therefore limited to those which fall within the framework of capitalist property and social relations, which latter are severely curtailed by the circumstances of the decline of capitalism and in the long run, if the capitalist dictatorship continues, involve fascism for the United States as elsewhere. . . .²

The Socialist Workers party has maintained that the capitalist system can never be made to surrender as the result of a popular mandate at the polls; it is too firmly entrenched, and has too much to lose. Only a forcible overthrow of the system by the working class, followed by the establishment of a Workers' State -- the dictatorship of the proletariat --³ can usher in a socialist society.

"On the basis of history and of theory, we are justified in predicting that the capitalist class will not surrender power to the working class without a violent struggle. History knows no example of the peaceful surrender of an exploiting minority to an oppressed majority. The actual conduct of the capitalist class at the present time, the violence it uses against the workers when they strike for an improvement in their conditions, confirm the historical lesson, and justify the prediction that they, who will lose their wealth and power, will utilize all forms of violence against the overwhelming majority.

"The form of government in the United States practically guarantees the ruling class its domination against the will of the majority of the people. . . ."⁴

Democracy¹

Trotskyists have denied that workers have any stake in preserving the American "democracy". They have regarded "democracy" as a political system coupled to a capitalist economy but completely subservient to, and under the control and domination of, the latter. They have maintained that genuine political democracy is impossible under capitalism that only a socialist society can provide an adequate economic basis for political democracy, and give it meaning and significance for workers.

²Socialist Workers Party, op. cit., pp. 6-7.

³Ibid., pp. 7-9. Goldman, op. cit., pp. 33-34.

⁴Goldman, op. cit., p. 34.

¹Socialist Workers Party, op. cit., p. 26. Goldman, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

"When we speak of democracy it must first of all be recognized that real democracy cannot exist for the workers so long as the basic means of production are owned and controlled by a small minority, the capitalist class. Democracy must of necessity be very limited under conditions where the possession of wealth affords a group all opportunities for the exercise of freedom of the press, while that group, which is composed of poor people, cannot exercise such a right for the simple reason that it has no press. Nor is it possible to have real democracy in a society where one class has all the economic resources at its disposal. In essence democracy under capitalism furnishes the workers no more than the doubtful right to choose between different groups of politicians who, in the end, will guard the property rights of the capitalist class. Using technical language, it can be said that capitalist democracy is nothing else but capitalist dictatorship, because through the ownership of all the means of production, the capitalists have the power to dictate to all sections of the population."²

Trotskyists have distinguished between the capitalist "democracy" and the democratic rights of workers. While they have not considered the former of significance to workers, they have constantly fought to preserve the latter: the right of workers to organize, strike and picket; conduct their own press, hold demonstrations and meetings free from molestation; distribute leaflets, etc. They have held that these are rights workers must correctly demand of the capitalist-democratic system -- rights which are constantly abridged when economic decline imperils the hegemony of the capitalist class.³

Fascism¹

Trotskyists have regarded fascism as an inevitable outgrowth of capitalism in its period of decline. It is a movement financed by Big Business, perhaps reluctantly, but as a necessary means of preserving the profit system against an assault of the working class which would overturn the system, and establish a proletarian dictatorship. It derives its

²Goldman, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

³Socialist Workers Party, op. cit., p. 26.

¹For general survey see Guerin, Fascism and Big Business, passim. Goldman, op. cit., p. 18. Socialist Workers Party, op. cit., pp. 4-5.

mass base from the middle class which has accepted the promises of a demagogue to solve the ever-growing dilemmas within the framework of the existing economic system.²

"In a period of capitalist decline, the bourgeoisie is able to maintain a sufficient measure of profits and its own position of social privilege only by constantly reducing the general living standards of the dispossessed majority, by imposing upon it unemployment, insecurity, curtailed social services, and periodically resorting to war. The resistance generated among the masses by this course completes the material pre-conditions of revolutionary crises, and poses the question of the overthrow of the capitalist order as the solution. When such crises near a climax, and the working class, because of the lack of a strong revolutionary party, fails to act decisively for the revolutionary solution, it suffers internal demoralization and loses the confidence of the middle class masses ruined by the crisis. Under the domination of finance-capital, a fascist movement is then able to succeed in mobilizing the desperate middle class elements and even certain demoralized sections of the working class on a wholly reactionary basis. Capitalist rule is reconsolidated through the victory of fascism; and capitalist society is temporarily 'saved' by the destruction of the workers' organizations, wholesale terror and violence against working class militants and the suppression of all forms of independent class expression."³

Democracy versus Fascism?

Trotskyists have raised the question of the best method of defeating fascism. They have definitely rejected the slogan, "democracy versus fascism", first raised by the Communist party, as a correct statement of the issue confronting the working class. They have argued that if one accepts their own analysis of democracy and fascism, such an orientation is utterly untenable. They have rather held that fascism can be defeated only by destroying capitalism, and not by defending "democracy", a system in which fascism has its roots and origin.¹

" . . . fascism can be stopped in only one way: by the overthrow of capitalism. So long as capitalism remains, the causes of fascism remain;

²Guerin, op. cit., p. xv.

³Socialist Workers Party, op. cit., p. 4.

¹Goldman, op. cit., pp. 18-19.

and from the cause, the effects will follow. . . ."2

"The war against Fascism can only be waged as a class war against imperialism. Between the Fascist and the so-called democratic powers the real antagonism is not of 'ideologies' or the political regimes, but of markets, colonies and raw materials. The idea of England or France or the United States waging a war for democracy as a political ideal is nonsense. . . .

"The war against Fascism can be waged successfully only as a revolutionary war. Such a war would have been justified in 1923 when the revolutionary crisis was maturing in Germany, the country was splitting up into two armed camps, and the Red Army was on the alert in the Soviet Union. . . . The proletariat of the Fascist and 'democratic' countries equally must proclaim Karl Liebknecht's slogan, 'The enemy is within your country'!"3

"The same counsellors who have ballyhooed the doctrine of collective security have told us that the great issue in the world is that between the democracies and the dictatorships, and have advised us to support the democracies against the dictatorships as the cure for all our troubles. . . .

"We have replied that the distinction between the democracies and the dictatorships is altogether secondary, that democratic government, such of it as remains, is on the whole the luxury of the relatively satisfied nations, dictatorship the expedient of the hungry nations or nations torn by internal crisis; and we have said that fundamental policies follow not from the form of government but from economic need and interest. The Soviet Union is a dictatorship, and we support and defend it; China and Loyalist Spain are in actuality military dictatorships, and we defend and support them against their enemies; Ethiopia was a feudal dictatorship, and we defended it against Italy. England, the United States and Czechoslovakia are democracies, and we oppose them as we oppose the imperialist fascist dictatorships."4

War¹

General Analysis. The Trotskyists have alleged that modern wars are inevitable under the capitalist system, resulting from the conflicting economic claims, desires and interests of rival capitalist and fascist nations. These rivalries and conflicts are based upon the struggle for con-

²Burnham, The People's Front, p. 32.

³Spector, "The Record of the Democracies," New International (April, 1938), Vol. IV, No. 4, p. 119.

⁴New International (Oct., 1938), Vol. IV, No. 10, p. 291.

¹West, War and the Workers, passim. Burnham, How to Fight War, passim. Draper, Are You Ready for War? passim. Goldman, op. cit., pp. 9-11. Communist League of America, War and the Fourth International, passim.

trol of raw materials, foreign markets for export trade, avenues for investment of surplus capital funds, monopoly of home markets, etc. In brief, modern imperialism has led to perpetual conflicts and perpetual crises which can be resolved only by resort to extreme physical violence.²

"Marxism points out that so long as capitalism endures, wars will come, that war under capitalism is not an 'accident' or an 'exceptional event', but an integral part of the very mechanism of capitalism. War is just as much a part of capitalism as are economic crises. You cannot have capitalism without having periodic crises and you cannot have capitalism without periodically having wars. The causes which bring about wars, the inescapable need for every advanced capitalist nation to attempt to expand its markets, gain cheaper sources of raw materials, find new outlets beyond the internal market for capital investment, can none of them be eliminated without eliminating capitalism itself.

"Every capitalist government, above all every imperialist government -- including outstandingly the U.S. government -- is therefore committed to war 'as an instrument of national policy' by the very fact that it is a capitalist government. To ask it to renounce war is like asking a living man to renounce oxygen."³

Program. The proposals by the Trotskyists for eliminating war flow from their basic orientation: the struggle against war is the struggle against capitalism; the struggle against capitalism is the struggle of revolutionary Marxism for its overthrow and the establishment of a socialist society.⁴

"Upon analysis it can be seen that the hope to do away with war, without doing away with the rivalries of the imperialist powers, is as utopian as the schemes to abolish unemployment under the capitalist system. To do away with war, we must get rid of imperialism, and to get rid of imperialism, we must abolish capitalism. Any other solution is no solution."⁵

"Since war is inevitably bred by capitalist society, the only genuine struggle against war is precisely the struggle against the social system which breeds it, the struggle against capitalism and for socialism. Only through the elimination of the causes for war will war itself be done away

²West, op. cit., pp. 5-9.

³Burnham, op. cit., p. 14.

⁴West, op. cit., pp. 10-14. Burnham, op. cit., pp. 14-15. Goldman, op. cit., p. 11.

⁵Goldman, op. cit., p. 11.

with. Through socialism alone can mankind establish the foundations for enduring peace."⁶

The Trotskyists' struggle against war has taken on the following specific aspects in the United States: opposition to American participation in all war ventures, whether in behalf of or against either the democratic or fascist states; the exposure of the causes of war; opposition to American war preparations as a means of preventing wars.⁷

In the event of a war crisis arising from American participation in an impending war, the Trotskyists have advocated the Leninist policy of "revolutionary defeatism", i.e., refusal to support it, disillusioning the masses, and attempting to turn the "imperialist war" into a civil war for the destruction of the capitalist system.⁸

"If, in spite of the efforts of the revolutionists and the militant workers, the U.S. government enters a new war, the S.W.P. will not under any circumstances support that war but will on the contrary fight against it. The S.W.P. will advocate the continuance of the class struggle during the war regardless of the consequences for the outcome of the American military struggle; and will try to prepare the masses to utilize the war crisis for the overthrow of U.S. capitalism and the victory of socialism."⁹

The Trotskyists have emphatically declared that no circumstances would justify their "suspension of the class struggle" against war, not even if the Soviet Union were fighting on the same side as the United States. Fundamentally, American imperialism would not fight for altruistic reasons; consequently the fundamental war thesis would not be affected by this coincidence.¹⁰

⁶Socialist Workers Party, op. cit., p. 23.

⁷Socialist Workers Party, op. cit., pp. 23-24.

⁸West, op. cit., p. 14.

⁹Socialist Workers Party, op. cit., p. 24.

¹⁰Communist League of America, op. cit., pp. 19-21. W.St., "Principles and Tactics in War," New International (May, 1938), Vol. IV, No. 5, pp. 144-146.

"The policy of the S.W.P. with respect to imperialist war holds good under all conditions: it applies if the war is conducted between the fascist imperialisms and the 'democratic' imperialisms in the same manner as if the war takes place between coalitions including both fascist and 'democratic' imperialisms on each side. It applies also if the United States is in military alliance with the Soviet Union. In the latter case, the S.W.P. would unreservedly support the Soviet Union against imperialism; but would expose the treacherous imperialist aims of the United States in the alliance, would call for the overthrow of U.S. capitalism and its replacement by a revolutionary workers' government which alone would carry forward the war in the interests of labor, of the revolutionary defense of the Soviet Union and of the world socialist revolution. . . ."¹¹

The Trotskyists have warned that American participation in a world war would mean fascism for the United States.¹² They have therefore "exposed" the alleged war preparations of the Roosevelt government, opposed its proposed mobilization plans, demanded the abolition of the R.O.T.C. and the use of the C.C.C. camps as centers of military preparedness.¹³ In the youth movement, they have given their support to the "Oxford oath" forswearing participation in any American imperialist war.¹⁴ Although at first opposed to the Ludlow Amendment providing for a referendum upon the question of American participation in war,¹⁵ the Trotskyists have changed their position and have given it their endorsement.¹⁶

The S.W.P. has refused to affiliate with the Keep America Out of War Committee (supported by the Socialist party and the Independent Labor League of America, among others) on the ground that its membership includes many pacifists and non-working class groups and that its basis is

¹¹ Socialist Workers Party, op. cit., p. 24.

¹² Draper, op. cit., pp. 8-9.

¹³ Ibid., pp. 16-17.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 17.

¹⁵ "Marxists and the Ludlow Bill," New International (Feb., 1938), Vol. IV, No. 2, pp. 39-40.

¹⁶ Socialist Appeal, May 21, 1938, p. 4.

not an anti-capitalist working class program.¹⁷

Opposition to Collective Security. Of considerably greater importance is the S.W.P.'s complete opposition to the war program advanced by the Communist party: endorsement of the People's Front, sanctions, and collective security; "quarantining the aggressor-nations"; support of the League of Nations. It has regarded these as class collaboration doctrines,¹⁸ thoroughly discredited by the former experiences of the international proletariat.¹⁹

¹⁷Socialist Appeal, March 12, 1938, pp. 1,5,6; June 11, 1938, pp. 1,4.

¹⁸For a Trotskyist criticism of these doctrines, see the criticism of the war position of the Communist International, discussed infra.

¹⁹Socialist Appeal, April 2, 1938, pp. 1-4.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY -- PRINCIPLES OF BOLSHEVIK-LENINISM ("TROTSKYISM")

Supporters of Trotsky have regarded themselves essentially as Bolshevik-Leninists. The term "Trotskyism" is one they have reluctantly but of necessity used because of the currency given it by their political opponents.

"Trotskyism has never been admitted as a label by the supporters of the views which are associated with the name of Trotsky. The Stalinists insist upon it in their attempts to prove Trotskyism something opposed to Leninism. The so-called Trotskyists are officially known as Bolshevik-Leninists. For a book of this kind, however, Bolshevik-Leninist would, for many reasons have been confusing, and for convenience a wilderness of quotation marks around the oft-repeated Trotskyism and Trotskyists has been omitted."¹

The following have been among the more significant theoretical doctrines propounded by Trotsky which are necessary to an understanding of the position taken by Trotskyists on important questions:² (1) The Theory of Permanent Revolution. (2) The Law of Combined Development. (3) The Thermidorian Conception of the Soviet State.

Theory of Permanent Revolution¹

Trotsky has stated that the theory of permanent revolution was not a concept developed by him during the tumultuous revolutionary period when the fate of the Soviet Union was being decided. On the contrary, it was formulated by him as early as 1905.

¹James, World Revolution, 1917-1936, p. 151, footnote.

²For a general survey, see Heisler, The First Two Moscow Trials, pp. 117-130.

¹For a more extended treatment of this thesis, see Trotsky, The Permanent Revolution; History of the Russian Revolution, Vol. III, Appendices.

Here is a subsequent resume of his thesis of that year:

"In accordance with its immediate tasks, the Russian Revolution is a bourgeois revolution. But the Russian bourgeoisie is anti-revolutionary. The victory of the Revolution is therefore possible only as a victory of the proletariat. But the victorious proletariat will not stop at the program of bourgeois democracy; it will go on to the program of Socialism. The Russian Revolution will become the first stage of the Socialist world revolution."²

"The present productive forces have long outgrown their national limits. A Socialist society is not feasible within national boundaries. Significant as the economic successes of an isolated workers' state may be, the program of 'Socialism in one country' is a petty-bourgeois Utopia. Only a European and then a world federation of Socialist republics can be the real arena for a harmonious Socialist society."³

Trotsky's Thesis. There are three stages in the development of the theory of the permanent revolution: (1) The revolution which destroys the democratic-capitalist system and ushers in the socialist system. (2) The transformation of the capitalist society over an extended period of years into a socialist society. (3) The extension of the socialist revolution to other countries.⁴

The first two stages of this theory have given rise to very few difficulties. Only the last stage has proved a serious problem. Trotskyists have held that the followers of Stalin have deemed it possible for a revolution to stop after the second stage; Trotskyists, on the other hand, have maintained that the revolution must be extended and go forward or be strangled by enemies from without; a Soviet regime cannot survive in a hostile, capitalist, anti-socialist world.

Numerous statements of the third stage have appeared in Trotsky's writings. A few are herewith presented.

²Trotsky, In Defense of the Russian Revolution, p. 23.

³Idem.

⁴Trotsky, The Permanent Revolution, pp. xxxii-xxxvi.

⁴Trotsky

"The international character of the socialist revolution, which constitutes the third aspect of the theory of the permanent revolution, results from the present state of economy and the social structure of humanity. Internationalism is no abstract principle, but a theoretical and political reflection of the character of world economy, of the world development of productive forces, and the world scale of the class struggle. The socialist revolution begins on national grounds. But it cannot be completed on these grounds. The maintenance of the proletarian revolution within a national framework can only be a provisional state of affairs, even though, as the experience of the Soviet Union shows, one of long duration. In an isolated proletarian dictatorship, the internal and external contradictions grow inevitably together with the growing successes. Remaining isolated, the proletarian state must finally become a victim of these contradictions. The way out for it lies only in the victory of the proletariat of the advanced countries. Viewed from this standpoint, a national revolution is not a self-sufficient whole: it is only a link in the international chain. The international revolution presents a process, in spite of all fleeting rises and falls."⁵

"The conquest of power by the proletariat does not terminate the revolution, but only opens it. Socialist construction is conceivable only on the foundation of the class struggle, on a national and international scale. This struggle, under the conditions of an overwhelming predominance of capitalist relationships on the world arena, will inevitably lead to explosions, that is, internally to civil wars, and externally, to revolutionary wars. Therein lies the permanent character of the socialist revolution as such, regardless of whether it is a backward country that is involved, which only yesterday accomplished its democratic revolution, or an old capitalist country, which already has behind it a long epoch of democracy and parliamentarism."⁶

"There were two fundamental propositions in the theory of permanent revolution. First, that despite the historical backwardness of Russia, the revolution can transfer the power into the hands of the Russian proletariat before the proletariat of advanced countries is able to attain it. Secondly, that the way out of those contradictions which will befall the proletarian dictatorship in a backward country, surrounded by a world of capitalist-enemies, will be found on the arena of world revolution. The first proposition is based upon a correct understanding of the laws of uneven development. The second depends upon a correct understanding of the indissolubility of the economic and political ties between capitalist countries. Bukharin is correct in saying that even today I still hold to these two basic propositions of the theory of permanent revolution. Today, more than ever before. For, in my opinion, they have been completely verified and proven: in theory, by the works of Marx and Lenin; in practice, by the experience of the October Revolution."⁷

⁵Ibid., pp. xxxv-xxxvi.

⁶Ibid., p. 154.

⁷Trotsky, Third International After Lenin, p. 40.

Criticism of "Socialism in One Country"

Trotsky has made numerous criticism of this theory: (1) It is economically impossible. It tends to overemphasize the successes of the Soviet regime and underemphasize the difficulties confronting the proletariat of Russia. (2) It leads to dangerous social-patriotic misconceptions. (3) It is not Marxism-Leninism; even Stalin himself believed differently before 1924.

Socialism In One Country Economically Impossible. It has been the contention of Trotsky that the building of socialism in one country is economically impossible: Production in industry often requires raw materials drawn from the four corners of the earth, and technological processes not equally developed in all countries. Modern economy is world economy; the failure to extend the October Revolution has resulted in such contradictory situations as extended trade agreements with Germany and Italy, the result of which has been to give aid to the enemies of communism and the Soviet Union.

Thus Trotsky has observed:

"Here we run right up against two mutually exclusive standpoints: the international revolutionary theory of the permanent revolution and the national reformist theory of socialism in one country. Not only backward China, but in general, no country in the world can build up socialism within its own national limits: the highly developed productive forces, which have grown out beyond the national boundaries, resist this just as do the forces insufficiently developed for nationalization. . . ."¹

"In the last analysis, all the contradictions of the development of the U.S.S.R. lead in this manner to the contradiction between the isolated workers' state and its capitalist encirclement. The impossibility of constructing a self-sufficient socialist economy in a single country revives the basic contradictions of socialist construction at every new stage on

¹Trotsky, Permanent Revolution, pp. 125-126.

an ever greater scale and with an ever greater depth. In this sense, the dictatorship of the proletariat in the U.S.S.R. would inevitably have to suffer destruction if the capitalist regime in the rest of the world would prove to be capable of maintaining itself for another long historical epoch. . . ."²

"Imperialism . . . aggravates to an exceptional degree the contradiction between the growth of the national productive forces of world economy and national state barriers."

"We have already stated that this proposition is, or rather was meant to be, the keystone of the international program. But it is precisely this proposition which excludes, rejects and sweeps away a priori the theory of socialism in one country as a reactionary theory because it is irreconcilably opposed not only to the fundamental tendency of development of the productive forces but also to the material results which have already been attained by this development. The productive forces are incompatible with national boundaries. Hence flow not only foreign trade, the export of men and capital, the seizure of territories, the colonial policy, and the last imperialist war, but also the economic impossibility of a self-sufficient socialist society. The productive forces of capitalist countries have long since broken through national boundaries. Socialist society, however, can be built only on the most advanced productive forces, on the application of electricity and chemistry to the processes of production including agriculture; on combining, generalizing, and bringing to maximum development the highest elements of modern technology. . . ."³

As an example of his contentions, Trotsky has pointed to the vast possibilities of a joint economy between Germany and the U.S.S.R. He has maintained that the failure of Stalin to hold this out to the workers of Germany prior to the rise of Hitler constituted a grave strategic error which was an inevitable and logical consequence of socialism in one country.

"The German Communists are spreading wide-scale propaganda concerning the successes of Soviet upbuilding. This work is necessary. They fly into sugared embellishments. That is entirely superfluous. But worse yet, they have been unable to link together both the successes and the difficulties of the Soviet economy with the immediate interests of the German proletariat; with unemployment, with the lowering of wages, and with the general economic impasse of Germany. They have been unable and unwilling to pose the question of Soviet-German collaboration on a strictly practical as well as deeply revolutionary basis.

"During the first stage of the crisis -- more than two years ago -- we posed this question in print. And the Stalinists immediately set up a

²Trotsky, Problems of the Development of the USSR., pp. 9-10.

³Trotsky, Third International After Lenin, p. 52.

hue and cry that we believe in the peaceful co-existence of socialism and capitalism, that we want to save capitalism, etc. They failed to foresee and understand just one thing, to wit, what a potent factor in a socialist revolution a concrete economic plan of collaboration could become, if it be made the subject of discussion in trade unions, and at factory meetings, among the workers of operation as well as of shut down industries; and if it be linked with the slogan of workers' control over production, and subsequently with the slogan of seizing power. For international planned collaboration can be realized only under government monopoly of foreign trade in Germany, and the nationalization of the means of production, in other words, under the dictatorship of the proletariat. Along this road, one could pull new millions of workers, non-party, social-democrat, and Catholic, into the struggle for power."⁴

Trotsky has also criticized with considerable severity the internal economy of the Soviet Union, whose policies have their roots, he has alleged, in Stalin's conception of the possibility of national autarchy.⁵

Socialism In One Country a Form of Social-Patriotism. It has been Trotsky's conviction that the thesis of socialism in one country is psychologically dangerous: it may develop a false mental set likely to lead to some form of chauvinism. Workers who are building socialism in their own country may tend to glorify it, set it up as a proletarian paragon and show an utter disregard for the workers of other lands, their hopes and aspirations, Trotsky has asserted. It may also make them forget what is perhaps most essential of all, that the socialism which any country attempts to construct is not safe from the invasion of fascism unless the world proletariat is prepared to play its part at home to defeat the irresponsible ventures of its despotic dictators.

" . . . The theory of the possibility of realizing socialism in one country destroys the inner connection between the patriotism of the victorious proletariat and the defeatism of the proletariat of the bourgeois countries. The proletariat of the advanced capitalist countries is still traveling on the road to power. How and in what manner it marches towards it depends entirely upon whether it considers the task of building the socialist society a national or an international task.

"If it is at all possible to realize socialism in one country, then

⁴Trotsky, What Next? p. 175.

⁵Discussed infra.

one can believe in that theory not only after but also before the conquest of power. If socialism can be realized within the national boundaries of backward Russia, then there is all the more reason to believe that it can be realized in advanced Germany. Tomorrow the leaders of the Communist Party of Germany will undertake to propound this theory. The draft program empowers them to do so. The day after tomorrow the French party will have its turn. It will be the beginning of the disintegration of the Comintern along the lines of social-patriotism. . . .⁶

"The theory of socialism in one country inexorably leads to an under-estimation of the difficulties which must be overcome and to an exaggeration of the achievements gained. One could not find a more anti-socialist and anti-revolutionary assertion than Stalin's statement to the effect that 'socialism has already been 90 percent realized in the U.S.S.R.' This statement seems to be especially meant for a smug bureaucrat. In this way one can hopelessly discredit the idea of a socialist society in the eyes of the toiling masses. The Soviet proletariat has achieved grandiose successes, if we take into consideration the conditions under which they have been attained and the low cultural level inherited from the past. But these achievements constitute an extremely small magnitude on the scales of the socialist ideal. . . . Instead of telling them fibs about having realized 90% socialism, we must say to them that our economic level, our social and cultural conditions, approximate today much closer to capitalism, and a backward and uncultured capitalism at that, than to socialism. We must tell them that we will enter on the path of real socialist construction only when the proletariat of the most advanced countries will have captured power; that is necessary to work unremittingly for this, using both levers -- the short lever of our internal economic efforts and the long lever of the international proletarian struggle."⁷

" . . . The break with the international position always leads to a national messianism, that is, to attribute special prerogatives and peculiarities to one's own country, which would permit it to play a role that other countries cannot attain.

"The world division of labor, the dependence of Soviet industry upon foreign technique, the dependence of the productive forces of the advanced countries of Europe upon Asiatic raw materials, etc., etc., make the construction of a socialist society in any single country impossible."⁸

Trotsky has offered in evidence the tragedy of the German Social Democracy prior to 1914 as his conception of the consequences of proletarian social-chauvinism:

"The patriotism of the German social democrats began as a legitimate patriotism to their own party, the most powerful party of the Second International. On the basis of the highly developed German technology and the superior organizational qualities of the German people, the German social

⁶Trotsky, Third International After Lenin, p. 72.

⁷Ibid., p. 66.

⁸Trotsky, The Permanent Revolution, p. 156.

democracy prepared to build its 'own' socialist society. If we leave aside the hardened bureaucrats, careerists, parliamentary sharpers, and political crooks in general, the social-patriotism of the rank and file social democrat was derived precisely from the belief in building German socialism. It is impossible to think that hundreds of thousands of rank and file social democrats (let alone the millions of rank and file workers) wanted to defend the Hohenzollerns or the bourgeoisie. No. They wanted to protect German industry, the German railways and highways, German technology and culture, and especially the organizations of the German working class, as the 'necessary and sufficient' national prerequisites for socialism."⁹

Socialism In One Country an Invention of Stalin. Trotsky has further held that socialism in one country is not only impossible, but actually contrary to the principles of Marxism-Leninism; Lenin never for one moment entertained this idea.¹⁰

According to Trotsky, the theory of permanent revolution versus socialism in one country was not an issue prior to 1924; up until that time Stalin held to the Lenin-Trotsky thesis. It was only after his (Trotsky's) expulsion that Stalin manufactured this fundamental, basic difference in viewpoint, it has been alleged. In setting forth this difference, moreover, Stalin also found it necessary to revise his written study of Leninism, and to make a complete reversal and right-about-face.¹¹

Trotskyists have alleged that in the Theory and Practice of Leninism, pages 45 and 46, published by the Communist party of Great Britain in 1925, Stalin explicitly propounded the theory of permanent revolution, as follows:

"But to overthrow the power of the bourgeoisie and establish that of the proletariat in a single country is still not to assure the complete victory of Socialism. The chief task, the organisation of Socialist production, is still to be accomplished. Can we succeed and secure the definitive victory of Socialism in one country without the combined efforts of the proletarians of several advanced countries? Most certainly not. The efforts of a single country are enough to overthrow the bourgeoisie: this is what

⁹Trotsky, Third International After Lenin, p. 70.

¹⁰See Trotsky's version of the Stalin-Trotsky controversy on Leninism, discussed supra.

¹¹Trotsky, The Permanent Revolution, p. ix; History of Russian Revolution, Vol. III, pp. 415-416. Heisler, The First Two Moscow Trials, pp. 120-121. James, World Revolution, 1917-1936, p. x.

the history of revolution proves. But for the definitive triumph of Socialism, the organisation of Socialist production, the efforts of one country are not enough, particularly of an essentially rural country like Russia; the efforts of the proletarians of several advanced countries are needed. So the victorious revolution in one country has for its essential task to develop and support the revolution in others. So it ought not to be considered as of independent value, but as an auxiliary, a means of hastening the victory of the proletariat in other countries.

"Lenin has curtly expressed this thought in saying that the task of the victorious revolution consists in doing the 'utmost in one country for the development, support, awakening of the revolution in other countries'. (Vide The Proletarian Revolution.) #12

Trotsky has also adduced a similar quotation from a Russian edition of Stalin's writings:

"What Stalin's views on this question were in 1905 or 1915 we have absolutely no means of knowing as there are no documents whatever on the subject. But in 1924, Stalin outlined Lenin's view on the building of socialism, as follows:

"The overthrow of the power of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of a proletarian government in one country does not yet guarantee the complete victory of socialism. The main task of socialism -- the organization of socialist production -- still remains ahead. Can this task be accomplished, can the final victory of socialism in one country be attained, without the joint efforts of the proletariat of several advanced countries? No, this is impossible. To overthrow the bourgeoisie, the efforts of one country are sufficient -- the history of our revolution bears this out. For the final victory of socialism, for the organization of socialist production, the efforts of one country, particularly of such a peasant country as Russia are insufficient. For this the efforts of the proletarians of several advanced countries are necessary. . . .

"Such, on the whole, are the characteristic features of the Leninist theory of the proletarian revolution.' (Stalin, Lenin and Leninism, pp. 40f., Russian ed., 1924.) /Italics are Stalin's and/or Trotsky's./

"One must concede that the 'characteristic features of the Leninist theory' are outlined here quite correctly. In later editions of Stalin's book this passage was altered to read in just the opposite way and 'the characteristic features of the Leninist theory' were proclaimed within a year as . . . Trotskyism. The Seventh Plenum of the E.C.C.I. passed its decision, not on the basis of the 1924 edition but of the 1926 edition.

"That is how the matter stands with Stalin. Nothing could be sadder. . . . #13

Trotskyists have further held that Stalin has never expounded his thesis of socialism in one country adequately.

¹²Stalin, quoted in James, op. cit., p. x.

¹³Trotsky, The Third International after Lenin, p. 36.

" . . . Incidentally, Stalin has nowhere developed this theory in a positive form, nor has he even expatiated on it. The entire foundation for it comes down to two quotations from Lenin that have been deliberately given a false interpretation. Stalin has made no reply to a single objection. The theory of socialism in one country has an administrative and not a theoretical foundation."¹⁴

Distortion of the Issue by Stalinists. Trotskyists have denied that the proponents of Stalin have adequately stated the issue. It is not simply a conflict between building socialism in the Soviet Union and striving for world revolution:

"There are those who ignorantly or maliciously represent the difference between Stalin and Trotsky to be the desire of the former to build up the Soviet Union industrially and the intention of the latter to concentrate upon the world revolution, entirely disregarding the industrial development of the Soviet Union. There is not an iota of truth in that formulation. Long before Stalin launched the first Five Year Plan, Trotsky was insisting against the opposition of Stalin, upon a more rapid industrialization of the country. At the same time, however, Trotsky contended that the difficulties and contradictions confronting the Russian workers could not be solved except through working-class revolutions in the advanced countries of Europe."¹⁵

Stalin himself stated the issue correctly on one occasion, although his followers have continued to distort it, the Trotskyists have averred.

" 'The difference in views lies in the fact,' says Stalin, 'that the party considers that these internal contradictions and possible conflicts can be entirely overcome on the basis of the inner forces of our revolution, whereas comrade Trotsky and the Opposition think that these contradictions and conflicts can be overcome "only on an international scale, on the arena of the world-wide proletarian revolution".' (Pravda, No. 262, Nov. 12, 1936.)"¹⁶

"Yes, this is precisely the difference. One could not express better and more correctly the difference between national reformism and revolutionary internationalism. . . ."¹⁷

¹⁴Trotsky, The Stalin School of Falsification, p. 197.

¹⁵Goldman, What Is Socialism? p. 44.

¹⁶Trotsky, Third International After Lenin, p. 62.

¹⁷Idem.

Law of Combined Development

The law of combined development forms an important link in Trotsky's exposition of Marxism-Leninism. Although he has not professed its discovery and initial exposition (it was also expounded by Lenin and is found in the writings of Georg Vollmar, who first formulated the theory of socialism in one country, as far back as 1878¹), its implications were very clearly formulated by him, he has held. Contrary to the opinions of many Marxists who adhered to the orthodox thesis that the socialist revolution would first appear in the most highly industrialized country of Europe, about 1905 Trotsky advanced the thesis that the revolution would break out in backward Russia before reaching such highly industrialized countries as England and Germany.²

According to Trotsky's presentation of Marx, industrial development would proceed in three evolutionary stages: the handicraft, the manufacture and the factory stages.³ Trotsky argued that the first two of these stages could be skipped, not only in economics but "in class relationships and politics",⁴ or at least, if not skipped, combined and compressed. In consequence one could logically prepare for and reasonably expect the revolution to appear in such a backward country as tsaristic Russia, especially since, as Lenin stated, Russia was the "weakest link in the capitalist chain".⁵

¹Trotsky, The Revolution Betrayed, p. 293; The Stalin School of Falsification, p. 135.

²Trotsky, The Permanent Revolution, p. 104.

³Ibid., p. 105.

⁴Idem.

⁵Trotsky, The Revolution Betrayed, p. 5.

The gist of the doctrine has been made clear in a few pertinent paragraphs found in the History of the Russian Revolution:⁶

"The laws of history have nothing in common with a pedantic schematism. Unevenness, the most general law of the historic process, reveals itself most sharply and complexly in the destiny of the backward countries. Under the whip of external necessity their backward culture is compelled to make leaps. From the universal law of unevenness thus derives another law, which, for the lack of a better name, we may call the law of combined development -- by which we mean a drawing together of the different stages of the journey, a combining of separate steps, an amalgam of archaic with more contemporary forms. Without this law, to be taken of course in its whole material content, it is impossible to understand the history of Russia, and indeed of any country of the second, third or tenth cultural class."⁷

"The law of combined development reveals itself most indubitably, however, in the history and character of Russian industry. Arising late, Russian industry did not repeat the development of the advanced countries, but inserted itself into this development, adapting their latest achievements to its own backwardness. Just as the economic evolution of Russia as a whole skipped over the epoch of craft-guilds and manufacture, so also the separate branches of industry made a series of special leaps over technical productive stages that had been measured in the West by decades. Thanks to this, Russian industry developed at certain periods with extraordinary speed. Between the first revolution and the war, industrial production in Russia approximately doubled. This has seemed to certain Russian historians a sufficient basis for concluding that 'we must abandon the legend of backwardness and slow growth'. In reality the possibility of this swift growth was determined by that very backwardness which, alas, continued not only up to the moment of liquidation of the old Russia, but as her legacy up to the present day."⁸

"The law of combined development of backward countries -- in the sense of a peculiar mixture of backward elements with the most modern factors -- here rises before us in its most finished form, and offers a key to the fundamental riddle of the Russian revolution. If the agrarian problem, as a heritage from the barbarism of the old Russian history, had been solved by the bourgeoisie, if it could have been solved by them, the Russian proletariat could not possibly have come to power in 1917. In order to realize the Soviet state, there was required a drawing together and mutual penetration of two factors belonging to completely different species: a peasant war -- that is, a movement characteristic of the dawn of bourgeois development -- and a proletarian insurrection, the movement

⁶See Trotsky, History of the Russian Revolution, Vol. I, Chapter I: The Permanent Revolution, pp. 104-108.

⁷Trotsky, History of the Russian Revolution, Vol. I, pp. 5-6.

⁸Ibid., p. 9.

signalizing its decline. That is the essence of 1917."⁹

Trotsky has stated that his espousal of the law of combined development gave him another theoretical basis for his firm belief that it would be possible for Russia to skip the political stage of bourgeois democracy and proceed directly to a proletarian dictatorship. In answer to one of his critics, the Russian historian, Professor Pokrovsky, first published in Pravda, in 1922,¹⁰ Trotsky justified the original position taken by him. Speaking on the "Peculiarities of Russia's Development", he said:

"The result of our belated historic development, in the conditions of the imperialist encirclement, was that our bourgeoisie did not have time to push out tsarism before the proletariat had become an independent revolutionary force."¹¹

Trotsky has intimated the existence of a connection between the law of combined development and the theory of permanent revolution,¹² but this writer has not encountered any detailed explanation in point.

As was invariably the case where a theoretical problem was involved, Trotsky declared, Stalin lacked an understanding of the theory of combined development and its implications.¹³ In polemicizing against him, Trotsky intimated that Stalin had hopelessly confused the problem and the issue:

"What is most unbearable in this discussion is the 'theorizing' of Stalin, with the two trinkets which constitute his whole theoretical baggage: 'the law of uneven development' and the 'non-skipping of stages'. Stalin does not understand to this day that the skipping of stages (or remaining too long at one stage) is just what the uneven development consists of. Against the theory of the permanent revolution, Stalin, with inimitable seriousness, sets up . . . the law of uneven development. Yet, the prognosis that historically backward Russia could arrive at the prole-

⁹ Ibid., pp. 50-51.

¹⁰ Reprinted in Trotsky, History of the Russian Revolution, Vol. I, pp. 463-470.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 465.

¹² Trotsky, Permanent Revolution, p. 106.

¹³ Trotsky, The Revolution Betrayed, pp. 292-293.

tarian revolution sooner than advanced England, rests entirely upon the law of uneven development. Only, for this prognosis, one had to understand the historic unevenness in its whole dynamic concreteness, and not simply be a permanent repeater of a quotation from Lenin in 1915, which is turned upside down and interpreted in the manner of an illiterate."¹⁴

Application: The Chinese Revolution. According to Trotsky, the fiasco of the Chinese Revolution was traceable, among other things, to Stalin's rejection of the possibility of skipping a stage in China's political development. Thus, it was charged that Stalin adhered to the necessity of supporting the Kuomintang in a bourgeois revolution because the Chinese could not proceed immediately and directly to a proletarian revolution. Stalin was quoted from a speech made in May, 1927, as follows:

"It is clear that whoever calls at present for the immediate creation of soviets of workers' deputies in this Wu-Han district, is attempting to jump [] over the Kuo Min Tang phase of the Chinese revolution, and he risks putting the Chinese revolution in a most difficult position."¹⁵

Thermidorian Conception of the Soviet State¹

The Thermidorian conception of the Soviet State proceeds from an analogy drawn by Trotsky between the development of the French and the Russian revolutions. It will be recalled by those familiar with the facts of the French Revolution that, beginning with the fall of the Bastille in 1789, the Revolution moved more or less steadily on a leftward course. In April 1793, unlimited powers were delegated by the National Convention to a Committee of Public Safety, consisting of nine (and later twelve) members. This Committee was completely dominated by Robespierre and the Jacobins. By July, 1794, the ultra-leftist course pursued by the Committee on Public Safety alarmed the more conservative members of the National Convention, among whose members

¹⁴Trotsky, Permanent Revolution, p. 106.

¹⁵Trotsky, Problems of the Chinese Revolution, p. 284. Also see James, World Revolution, 1917-1936, Chapter IX.

¹For a general survey see Trotsky, "The Soviet Union Today," New International (July, 1935), Vol. II, No. 4, pp. 116-122.

a coalition was formed against Robespierre. The National Convention withdrew its vote of confidence and Robespierre and his clique fell from power, to meet their death at the guillotine. The restoration of the power to the Convention was marked by a steady swing to the right by the bourgeoisie who were again completely in the saddle. The culmination was Napoleon's coup d'etat in 1799, and the rise of Bonapartism, a one-man dictatorship in France. This reactionary era from the fall of Robespierre to the rise of Napoleon Bonaparte has been known as the Thermidorian Reaction because Robespierre's fall (July 27, 1794) occurred on the ninth of Thermidor, Year II, of the newly created but short-lived French calendar.²

The position taken by Trotsky and his followers has been that: (1) Trotsky's dismissal from his government posts (People's Commissar of War, etc.) in 1925, followed by his exile to central Asia in 1928 and subsequent deportation in 1929, is analogous to the fall of Robespierre in 1794.³

(2) The rule of the bureaucracy in Soviet Russia represented the same counter-revolutionary tendencies as the Thermidorian reaction of 1794-1799.

(3) In order to suppress all effective opposition, Stalin has become the sole dictator of Russia, in the fashion of Napoleon. (4) Only the uprising of the Russian proletariat and peasantry and the world proletariat can restore the revolution to its original and correct course and prepare the way for international socialism.

The Trotskyists have pointed out a great difference between the French and the Russian Thermidor: the former was an out-and-out reaction; the latter slowly developed and was more real than apparent for a long time.

" . . . The Thermidor conspiracy at the end of the eighteenth century, prepared for by the preceding course of the revolution, broke out with a

²Trotsky, The Stalin School of Falsification, pp. 142, 146, 323.

³Schachtman, Ten Years--History and Principles of the Left Opposition, pp. 72-73.

single blow and assumed the shape of a sanguinary finale. Our Thermidor was long drawn out. The guillotine found its substitute -- at least for a while -- in intrigue. The falsifying of the past, systematized on the conveyor plan, became a weapon for the ideological rearming of the official party. . . ."4

The Soviet Thermidor. In explaining the Thermidorian reaction in the Soviet Union, Trotsky has attributed it to several factors: the deficit economy under which the Soviet Union was operating, the weariness of the masses and the rise of a bureaucracy which took advantage of the existing situation.

"It is sufficiently well known that every revolution up to this time has been followed by a reaction, or even a counter-revolution. This, to be sure, has never thrown the nation all the way back to its starting point, but it has always taken from the people the lion's share of their conquests. The victims of the first reactionary wave have been, as a general rule, those pioneers, initiators, and instigators who stood at the head of the masses in the period of revolutionary offensive. In their stead people of the second line, in league with the former enemies of the revolution, have been advanced to the front. Beneath this dramatic duel of 'coryphées' on the open political scene, shifts have taken place in the relations between classes, and, no less important, profound changes in the psychology of the recently revolutionary masses.

"Answering the bewildered questions of many comrades as to what has become of the activity of the Bolshevik party and the working class -- where is its revolutionary initiative, its spirit of self-sacrifice and plebian pride -- why, in place of all this, has appeared so much vileness, cowardice, pusillanimity and careerism -- Rakovsky referred to the life story of the French revolution of the eighteenth century, and offered the example of Babeuf, who on emerging from the Abbaye prison likewise wondered what had become of the heroic people of the Parisian suburbs. A revolution is a mighty devourer of human energy, both individual and collective. The nerves give way. Consciousness is shaken and characters are worn out. Events unfold too swiftly for the flow of fresh forces to replace the loss. Hunger, unemployment, the death of the revolutionary cadres, the removal of the masses from administration, all this led to such a physical and moral impoverishment of the Parisian suburbs that they required three decades before they were ready for a new insurrection."5

"We have defined the Soviet Thermidor as a triumph of the bureaucracy over the masses. We have tried to disclose the historic conditions of this triumph. The revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat was in part devoured

⁴Trotsky, My Life, p. 505.

⁵Trotsky, The Revolution Betrayed, pp. 88-89.

by the administrative apparatus and gradually demoralized, in part annihilated in the civil war, and in part thrown out and crushed. The tired and disappointed masses were indifferent to what was happening on the summits. . . ."⁶

"The demobilization of the Red Army of five million played no small role in the formation of the bureaucracy. The victorious commanders assumed leading posts in the local Soviets, in economy, in education, and they persistently introduced everywhere that regime which had ensured success in the civil war. Thus on all sides the masses were pushed away gradually from actual participation in the leadership of the country."⁷

"The international situation was pushing with mighty forces in the same direction. The Soviet bureaucracy became more self-confident, the heavier the blows dealt to the world working class. Between these two facts there was not only a chronological, but a causal connection, and one which worked in two directions. The leaders of the bureaucracy promoted the proletarian defeats; the defeats promoted the rise of the bureaucracy. The crushing of the Bulgarian insurrection . . . -- these are the historic catastrophes which killed the faith of the Soviet masses in world revolution, and permitted the bureaucracy to rise higher and higher as the sole light of salvation."⁸

" . . . Here we are concerned primarily with the irrefutable and instructive fact that the continual defeats of the revolution in Europe and Asia, while weakening the international position of the Soviet Union, have vastly strengthened the Soviet bureaucracy. . . ."⁹

The economic nature of transition economy made it impossible for everyone to obtain a large share of consumable goods. In order to stimulate production a system of graded payments for different quality and quantity of work had been evolved. This system gave rise to a privileged minority which fought to maintain its privileges. It was best able to accomplish this by allying itself with the ruling bureaucracy, which also had taken more than its share of the produce. This alliance of the economically privileged with the ruling political bureaucracy thus made the Thermidorian reaction possible.¹⁰ In other words, the Russian Thermidor, like the

⁶Ibid., p. 105.

⁷Ibid., pp. 89-90.

⁸Ibid., p. 90.

⁹Ibid., p. 91.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 111-114; also Chapter VI.

French, rested on an economic base.

"The basis of bureaucratic rule is the poverty of society in objects of consumption, with the resulting struggle of each against all. . . .

" . . . The present state of production is still far from guaranteeing all necessities to everybody. But it is already adequate to give significant privileges to a minority, and convert inequality into a whip for the spurring on of the majority. . . .

" Alongside the economic factor dictating capitalistic methods of payment at the present stage, there operates a parallel political factor in the person of the bureaucracy itself. In its very essence it is the planter and protector of inequality. It arose in the beginning as the bourgeois organ of a workers' state. In establishing and defending the advantages of a minority, it of course draws off the cream for its own use. Nobody who has wealth to distribute ever omits himself. Thus out of a social necessity there has developed an organ which has far outgrown its socially necessary function, and becomes an independent factor and therefore with the source of great danger for the whole social organism."¹²

" . . . It concentrates in its own hands not only the entire power but it consumes by hook and crook an enormous share of the national income. In this way it has succeeded in removing itself so far away from the masses of the population as to make it impossible any longer to permit any control whatever over its actions and its income."¹³

The Soviet Bureaucracy. In accounting for the nature of the Soviet bureaucracy, Trotsky has implied that it has been in a paradoxical position: its own interests have required it to preserve the socialist society; at the same time, it has been called upon to solve incompatible problems. Its inefficient resolving of these issues has worked great hardships upon the workers and at the same time has contributed greatly to the downfall of the system it must preserve.

"The role of the Soviet bureaucracy remains a dual one. Its own interests constrain it to safeguard the new economic regime created by the October revolution against the enemies at home and abroad. This work remains historically necessary and progressive. In this work the world proletariat supports the Soviet bureaucracy without closing their eyes to its national conservatism, its appropriative instincts and its spirit of caste privilege. But it is precisely these traits which are increasingly paralyzing its progressive work. The growth of industry and the drawing of agriculture into the sphere of state planning complicate extraordinarily the tasks of the economic leadership. . . . The bureaucracy extricates itself

¹¹ Ibid., p. 105. Trotsky, Kirov Assassination, p. 25.

¹² Trotsky, The Revolution Betrayed, pp. 112-113.

¹³ Trotsky, Kirov Assassinations, p. 11.

from difficulties arising from its mistakes by loading their consequences onto the shoulders of the toilers. . . ."¹⁴

" . . . Squandering unproductively a tremendous portion of the national income, the Soviet bureaucracy is interested at the same time by its very function, in the economic and cultural growth of the country: the higher the national income, the more copious its funds of privileges. Concurrently, upon the social foundations of the Soviet state, the economic and cultural uplift of the laboring masses must tend to undermine the very bases of bureaucratic domination. Clearly, in the light of this fortunate historical variant, the bureaucracy turns out to be only the instrument -- a hand and an expensive instrument -- of the socialist state."¹⁵

Trotsky has drawn up a very indicting brief against the bureaucracy. Fundamental, perhaps, has been the charge that it stifled all opposition to itself by completely destroying democracy within the Communist International (which it controlled), the Communist party in Soviet Russia and on all high councils of the party. The bureaucracy held undivided sway.

" . . . the party apparatus . . . has become utterly permeated with the bureaucratic deformations of the state apparatus, superimposing upon the latter the specific distortions -- fraud, camouflage, duplicity -- elaborated by the bourgeois parliamentary 'democracy'. As a consequence, a leadership has been formed which, instead of the conscious party democracy, provides: a falsification and an adaptation of Leninism designed to strengthen the party bureaucracy; a monstrous and an intolerable abuse of power in relation to communists and workers; a fraudulent operation of the entire electoral machinery of the party; an application of methods during discussion which might be the boast of a bourgeois-Fascist power, but never of a proletarian party (picked gangs of thugs, whistling and jeering to order, throwing speakers from the platform, and similar abominations); and last but not least, an absence of comradely cohesiveness and conscientiousness all along the line in the relations between the apparatus and the party."¹⁶

To Trotsky, this alleged party autocracy was incredible. Why, he asked, in the early revolutionary days during the life of Lenin " . . . was it possible to dispute openly and fearlessly in the party about the most critical questions of policy. . . ." while in a more stabilized era the expression of any doubts concerning the wisdom of Stalin's policies re-

¹⁴Ibid., p. 12.

¹⁵Trotsky, Soviet Union and the Fourth International, p. 21.

¹⁶Trotsky, Third International After Lenin, p. 302.

sulted in wholesale and forthright expulsions?¹⁷ Trotsky's attacks upon the bureaucracy were therefore sharp, caustic and relentless; his writings abounded in scathing indictments of the party bureaucrats.

"In the meantime this same functionary bears the least resemblance to an incorporeal spirit. He eats and guzzles and procreates and grows himself a respectable pot-belly. He lays down the law with a sonorous voice, hand-picks from below people faithful to him, remains himself faithful to his superiors, prohibits others from criticizing himself and sees in all this the gist of the general line. Of such functionaries there are a few million. A few million! Their number is greater than the number of industrial workers in the period of the October revolution. The majority of these functionaries never participated in the class struggle which is bound up with sacrifices, self-denials and dangers. These people in their overwhelming mass were politically born already in the qualification of a ruling caste. They are backed by the state power. It assures them their livelihood and raises them considerably above the surrounding masses. They know nothing of the dangers of unemployment, if they are gifted with the capacity to stand at attention. The grossest errors are forgiven them so long as they are ready to fulfill the role of the sacrificial scape-goat at the required moment, and thus remove the responsibility from the shoulders of their nearest superiors. Well, then, has this ruling stratum of many millions any social weight and political influence in the life of a country? Yes or No?"¹⁸

Trotsky has sharply distinguished between a possessing class and a privileged class. He has willingly conceded that the former does not exist; but of the latter, there can be no doubt.

"To be sure, in the Soviet Union there are no possessing classes, whose extravagance is balanced by an under-consumption of the popular mass. However the weight of this corrective is not so great as might appear at first glance. . . . We shall see later, moreover, that although the Soviet Union has no possessing classes in the proper sense of the word, still she has very privileged commanding strata of the population, who appropriate the lion's share in the sphere of consumption. . . ."¹⁹

"The basis of bureaucratic rule is the poverty of society in objects of consumption, with the resulting struggle of each against all. When there is enough goods in a store, the purchasers can come whenever they want to. When there is little goods, the purchasers are compelled to stand in line. When the lines are very long, it is necessary to appoint a policeman to keep order. Such is the starting point of the power of the Soviet bureaucracy. It 'knows' who is to get something and who has to wait."²⁰

¹⁷Trotsky, The Revolution Betrayed, p. 108.

¹⁸Trotsky, What Next? pp. 120-121.

¹⁹Trotsky, The Revolution Betrayed, p. 19.

²⁰Ibid., p. 112.

" . . . The present state of production is still far from guaranteeing all necessities to everybody. But it is already adequate to give significant privileges to a minority, and convert inequality into a whip for the spurring on the majority. That is the first reason why the growth of production has so far strengthened not the socialists, but the bourgeois features of the state."²¹

" . . . It devours, wastes, and embezzles a considerable portion of the national income. Its management costs the proletariat very dearly. In the Soviet society, it occupies an extremely privileged position not only in the sense of having political and administrative prerogatives but also in the sense of possessing enormous material advantages. Still, the biggest apartments, the juiciest steaks, and even Rolls Royces are not enough to transform the bureaucracy into an independent ruling class."²²

Trotsky has likened the bureaucracy to the clergy. The clergy (and the bureaucracy) are not exploiters in the true sense of the term; rather they are parasites who live from the production of the workers.

"To put it plainly, insofar as the bureaucracy robs the people (and this is done in various ways by every bureaucracy), we have to deal not with class exploitation, in the scientific sense of the word, but with social parasitism, although on a very large scale. . . . In its traits of parasitism, the bureaucracy, as well as the clergy, approximates to the lumpen-proletariat, which likewise does not represent, as is well-known, an independent 'class'. "²³

In answer to the question "Is the bureaucracy a ruling class?" Trotsky has conceded that the correct reply is negative.

" . . . The bureaucracy is in direct possession of the state power, it raises itself above the classes, puts a powerful stamp upon their development, and even if it cannot itself become the foundation of state power, it can, with its policy, make it extremely easier for the power to be transferred from the hands of one class into the hands of another."²⁴

But this has not constituted a ruling class. The property relations established by the October revolution still remain intact. Until the property relations are seriously impaired, the bureaucracy cannot be called a ruling class as understood by Marx and Lenin.

²¹ Idem.

²² Trotsky, The Soviet Union and the Fourth International, p. 19.

²³ Ibid., pp. 20-21.

²⁴ Trotsky, Problems of the Development of the U.S.S.R., p. 21.

" . . . The bureaucracy has not yet created special supports for its dominion in the form of special types of property. It is compelled to defend state property as the source of its power and its income. In this aspect of its activity it still remains a weapon of proletarian dictatorship."²⁵

" . . . As a conscious political force the bureaucracy has betrayed the revolution. But a victorious revolution is fortunately not only a program and a banner, not only political institutions, but also a system of social relations. To betray it is not enough. You have to overthrow it. The October revolution has been betrayed by the ruling stratum, but not yet overthrown. It has a great power of resistance, coinciding with the established property relations, with the living force of the proletariat, the consciousness of its best elements, the impasse of world capitalism, and the inevitability of world revolution."²⁶

From Thermidor to Bonapartism. For many years, Trotsky denied that Bonapartism had come to the U.S.S.R. He held that the regime was at worst a pre-Bonapartist regime but that Bonapartism was not inevitable; it could be checked in time. In 1931, he wrote in this vein:

" . . . To identify the present Soviet regime with the social regime of Bonapartism, as Kautsky does, means consciously to conceal from the workers, in the interests of the bourgeoisie, the difference in class foundations. Notwithstanding this, one can speak with full right of the completed plebiscitary degeneration of the Stalinist apparatus or of the Bonapartist system of administering the party as one of the pre-conditions of the Bonapartist regime in the country. . . . The present-day Soviet apparatus is a bureaucratic, plebiscitarily distorted form of the dictatorship of the proletariat. At the same time, however, it is a potential instrument of Bonapartism. Between the present function of the apparatus and its possible function, the blood of civil war would still have to flow. . . ."¹

He declared that Bonapartism could come only under certain objective conditions, as a tail-end of Thermidor:

" . . . The Bonapartist regime can attain a comparatively stable and durable character only in the event that it brings a revolutionary epoch to a close; when the relationship of forces has already been tested in battles; when the revolutionary classes are already spent; while the possessing classes have not yet freed themselves from the fear; will not the morrow bring new convulsions? Without this basic condition, that is, with-

²⁵Trotsky, The Revolution Betrayed, p. 249.

²⁶Ibid., pp. 251-252.

¹Trotsky, Problems of the Development of the U.S.S.R., p. 24.

out a preceding exhaustion of the mass energies in battles, the Bonapartist regime is in no position to develop."²

With the passing of years, Trotsky declared he was forced to modify his viewpoint. He was finally convinced that the Soviet regime had passed through its Thermidorian reaction and had traversed the high road to Bonapartism.³ The bureaucracy looked forward to, and found, a leader who symbolized their privileges and who would fight to retain them. The leader, on the other hand, recognized that his ambitions were realizable only in and through the bureaucracy. He accepted the leadership, prepared, at the crucial time, to cast off the bureaucracy and crush any opposition expressed to his policies and ultimate dictatorship. Thus all matters worked well because of the mutual needs of the bureaucracy and the leader. But after a time the bureaucracy too found itself under the iron heel of the leader. It discovered too late that it was also being crushed along with the proletariat which it had betrayed.

"It would be naive to imagine that Stalin, previously unknown to the masses, suddenly issued from the wings full armed with a complete strategical plan. No indeed. Before he felt out his own course, the bureaucracy felt out Stalin himself. He brought it all the necessary guarantees: the prestige of an old Bolshevik, a strong character, narrow vision, and close bonds with the political machine as the sole source of his influence. The success which fell upon him was a surprise at first to Stalin himself. It was the friendly welcome of the new ruling group, trying to free itself from the old principles and from the control of the masses, and having need of a reliable arbiter of its inner affairs. A secondary figure before the masses and in the events of the revolution, Stalin revealed himself as the indubitable leader of the Thermidorian bureaucracy, as first in its midst."⁴

" . . . The Soviet bureaucracy is like all ruling classes in that it is ready to shut its eyes to the crudest mistakes of its leader in the sphere of general politics, provided in return they show an unconditional fidelity in the defense of its privileges. The more alarmed become the modd of the new lords of the situation, the higher the value they set upon the ruthlessness against the least threat to their so justly earned rights. It is from this point of view that the caste of parvenus selects its leaders. Therein

² Trotsky, The Only Road for Germany, p. 16.

³ Trotsky, The Revolution Betrayed, pp. 273-279.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 92-93.

lies the secret of Stalin's success."⁵

" . . . The Stalinist faction is compelled ever anew to destroy 'completely' the 'remnants' of old and new oppositions, to resort to ever more violent methods and to place in circulation amalgams which become more and more envenomed. At the same time this very faction raises itself above the party and even above the bureaucracy itself. It openly proclaims the purely Bonapartist principle of the infallibility of a life-time leader. The sole virtue of a revolutionist to be recognized hereafter is fidelity to the leader. . . ."⁶

" . . . After the bureaucracy had strangled the internal life of the party, the Stalinist top strangled the internal life of the bureaucracy itself. Henceforth only one thing is permissible; to glorify the 'Great Leader', the 'Beloved Chief'. . . ."⁷

Trotsky's statements on whether Bonapartism would bring with it a capitalist counter-revolution have varied somewhat, but he has adhered to his contentions that the Soviet Union is still a workers' state, despite its Bonapartism. He has warned that, unless checked, it will in time affect the economic basis of the Soviet Union.

" . . . By Thermidorian overthrow, the Left Opposition always understood such a shifting of power from the proletariat to the bourgeoisie which is in essence already decisive, but is accomplished formally still within the framework of the Soviet system under the banner of one faction of the official party against the other. In contrast to this, the Bonapartist overthrow appears as a more open, 'riper' form of the bourgeois counter-revolution, carried out against the Soviet system, and the Bolshevik party as a whole, in the form of the naked sabre which is raised in the name of bourgeois property. The crushing of the Right wing of the party and its renunciation of its platform, diminish the chances of the first, step-by-step, veiled, that is, the Thermidorian form of the overthrow. The plebiscitary degeneration of the party apparatus undoubtedly increases the chances of the Bonapartist form. However, Thermidor and Bonapartism represent no irreconcilable class types, but are only stages of development of the same type, in which the living historic process is inexhaustible in the sphere of creating transitional and combined forms. . . ."⁸

" . . . In the heated atmosphere of war one can expect sharp turns toward individualistic principles in agriculture and in handicraft industry, toward the attraction of foreign and 'allied' capital, breaks in the

⁵Ibid., p. 274.

⁶Trotsky, Kirov Assassinations, p. 13.

⁷Ibid., p. 25.

⁸Trotsky, Problems of the Development of the U.S.S.R., pp. 30-31.

monopoly of foreign trade, the weakening of governmental control over trusts, the sharpening of competition between the trusts, their conflicts with workers, etc. In the political sphere these processes may mean the completion of Bonapartism with the corresponding change or a number of changes in property relations. In other words, in case of a protracted war accompanied by the passivity of the world proletariat the internal social contradictions in the U.S.S.R. not only might lead but would have to lead to a bourgeois-Bonapartist counter-revolution.⁹

" . . . Bonapartism is one of the political weapons of the capitalist regime in its critical period. Stalinism is a variety of the same system, but upon the basis of a workers' state torn by the antagonism between an organized and armed soviet aristocracy and the unarmed toiling masses."¹⁰

"The Stalin bureaucracy which has concentrated all power in its hands is, for the time being, the triumphant bearer of a political counter-revolution, which, while it has already infringed upon the socio-economic foundations of the new state -- namely, the nationalized means of production and exchange -- has not yet replaced them with other foundations -- namely, private property in the means of production and exchange. The political counter-revolution has thus far mainly affected the political super-structure of the state. If its retrogressive force is not to affect fundamentally the economic sub-structure, that is, if the nationalized means of production and exchange are to be preserved and strengthened and developed systematically in the direction of a socialist economy, the new superstructure must be changed. . . ."¹¹

"The inevitable collapse of the Stalinist political regime will lead to the establishment of Soviet democracy only in the event that the removal of Bonapartism comes as the conscious act of the proletarian vanguard. In all other cases, in place of Stalinism, there could only come the Fascist-capitalist counter-revolution."¹²

Trotsky has argued that Bonapartism reaches its highest development when it is able to get its actions sanctioned by the masses. The sanction is not necessarily obtained by democratic methods, but nominal, if not actual, approval and consent are obtained. Stalin has been unusually successful in this regard, Trotsky has declared; the new Soviet constitution is the example par excellence of carrying on a Bonapartist regime with popular acquiescence.

⁹International Secretariat of the International Communist League, War and the Fourth International, p. 22.

¹⁰Trotsky, The Revolution Betrayed, pl 278.

¹¹Trotsky, The Stalin School of Falsification, pp. xxvi-xxvii.

¹²Trotsky, "The Soviet Union Today," New International (July, 1935), Vol. II, No. 4, pp. 121-122.

As history testifies, Bonapartism gets along admirably with a universal, and even a secret, ballot. The democratic ritual of Bonapartism is the plebiscite. From time to time, the question is presented to the citizens: for or against the leader? And the voter feels the barrel of a revolver between his shoulders. Since the time of Napoleon III, who now seems a provincial dilettante, this technique has received an extraordinary development. The new Soviet constitution which establishes Bonapartism on a plebiscite basis is the veritable crown of the system.*¹³

Trotsky has traced Bonapartism to the fundamental fallacy underlying Stalinism: socialism in one country. He has argued that had Stalin pursued the one and only correct line for a Bolshevik-Leninist, the theory of permanent revolution, the factors which made possible the rise of Bonapartism would not have been given the opportunity to develop.

*In the last analysis, Soviet Bonapartism owes its birth to the belatedness of the world revolution. But in the capitalist countries the same cause gave rise to fascism. We thus arrive at the conclusion, unexpected at first glance, but in reality inevitable, that the crushing of Soviet democracy by an all-powerful bureaucracy and the extermination of bourgeois democracy by fascism were produced by one and the same cause: the dilatoriness of the world proletariat in solving the problems set for it by history. Stalinism and fascism, in spite of a deep difference in social foundations, are symmetrical phenomena. In many of their features they show a deadly similarity. A victorious revolutionary movement in Europe would immediately shake not only fascism, but Soviet Bonapartism. In turning its back to the international revolution, the Stalinist bureaucracy was, from its own point of view, right. It was merely obeying the voice of self-preservation.*¹⁴

The Moscow Trials have been regarded as the inevitable results of Bonapartism: Opposition must be crushed at all costs; if necessary, charges must be invented, evidence must be falsified, death sentences must be imposed. But Opposition must be crushed! As a result of these trials, all the old Bolshevik leaders and associates of Lenin were either killed or imprisoned. Not one has remained but Stalin alone. Such is the path of Bonapartism, according to Trotsky's analysis.¹⁵

¹³Trotsky, The Revolution Betrayed, p. 278.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 278-279.

¹⁵The Moscow Trials have been discussed, supra.

Solution of Thermidor -- The Forcible Overthrow of Stalinism. Trotsky's

attitude towards Stalin and the Soviet bureaucracy has undergone several changes since his expulsion from the U.S.S.R. in 1928: (1) critical support of the Soviet bureau; (2) expression of doubts concerning the probability of reforming the Soviet bureaucracy; (3) outright advocacy of the forcible overthrow of the Stalin regime.

In 1931 Trotsky was still optimistic concerning the possibilities of bringing the Stalin bureaucracy over to his point of view. The Soviet Union, still being a workers' state offered no ground for a pessimistic outlook; a recognition of Thermidorian potentialities did not preclude the possibility of avoiding them by correct future developments.¹⁶ In the 1932-1933 period, Trotsky expressed grave doubts about Stalin and the Soviet bureaucracy. But he did not take the fatal step of breaking beyond reconciliation. But by 1934 Trotsky finally came around to his present position. He denied the possibility of removing the bureaucracy peacefully.

" . . . we are confronted with a diseased and degenerating dictatorship which, if left to itself, will end not in 'workers' democracy', but in the complete collapse of the Soviet regime."¹⁷

" . . . No normal 'constitutional' ways remain to remove the ruling clique. The bureaucracy can be compelled to yield power into the hands of the proletarian vanguard only by force."¹⁸

Trotsky now stands firmly convinced of the necessity as well as inevitability of a new revolution in the Soviet Union to overthrow the Stalin bureaucracy and restore the October Revolution to its leftward course.¹⁹ The Soviet Union still remains a workers' state. But it is a race between the bureaucracy and the Soviet workers. One or the other must in time con-

¹⁶Trotsky, Problems of the Development of the U.S.S.R., p. 36.

¹⁷Trotsky, Whither France? p. 111.

¹⁸Trotsky, The Soviet Union and the Fourth International, p. 25.

¹⁹Trotsky, The Revolution Betrayed, pp. 284-290.

quer. The two are incompatible, he has alleged.

"Stalinism, solidified into a monolithic monster, has become absolutely incompatible with the revolution, whether with the Soviet Union or internationally. The course of the Stalinist military-bureaucratic dictatorship over the Russian masses is now in direct and irreconcilable conflict with the expansion of the socialized economy, and the social and political interests of the masses. This is the present crisis of the Russian Revolution.

"One or the other must win; one or the other must be destroyed. Either the Russian masses, stimulated and aided by a renewed upsurge on the part of the international proletariat, will sweep aside the military-bureaucratic regime which is strangling them, reconquer power and control of their own destiny, and head Soviet society as a whole once more on the path of socialism; or the continued rule of the bureaucracy, with its sabotage and disruption of the economy and the whole social order, and its cumulative undermining of the remaining socialist foundations of the economy, will result in the restoration of capitalist exploitation and capitalist rule. There is no middle road.

"Stalinism has nothing in common with socialism, with Bolshevism, with the ideas or policies or methods of those who made the Revolution. The Stalinist Party, masquerading as the Communist Party, is the direct opposite of the Bolshevik Party of the Revolution. The Bolshevik Party the Party of Lenin and Trotsky, still lives within the Soviet Union, but it lives in hiding, in the prisons, the concentration camps, in exile, and in the hearts and memories of the workers.

"The totalitarian nature of the Stalinist military-bureaucratic dictatorship over the masses, and its complete reliance upon the suppression of all opposition and upon the guns of the G.P.U. have excluded the possibility of the legal and peaceful reform of the regime. By his own acts and his own system, Stalin has left the masses only the one resort of political revolution to re-establish their power.

"The defense of the Russian Revolution, of the greatest victory of the working class, thus imposes as an inescapable duty the unremitting struggle against, and the overthrow of, Stalinism -- the deadly and irrevocable enemy of that Revolution."²¹

"Only the overthrow of the Bonapartist Kremlin clique can make possible the regeneration of the military strength of the U.S.S.R. Only the liquidation of the ex-Comintern will clear the way for revolutionary internationalism. The struggle against war, imperialism, and fascism demands a ruthless struggle against Stalinism splashed with crimes. Whoever defends Stalinism directly or indirectly, whoever keeps silent about its betrayals or exaggerates its military strength is the worst enemy of the revolution, of socialism, and of the oppressed peoples. The sooner the Kremlin gang is overthrown by the armed offensive of the workers, the greater will be the chances for a socialist regeneration of the U.S.S.R., the closer and broader will be the perspectives of the international revolution."²²

²⁰ Ibid., p. 285.

²¹ Trotsky, Socialist Appeal, Nov. 6, 1937, pp. 4,8.

²² Trotsky, "A Fresh Lesson," New International (Dec., 1938), Vol. IV, No. 12, p. 362.

Trotsky has declared that he has not been unaware that his position will lead to the accusation that he has been playing into the hands of the reactionaries, and has been an enemy of the Soviet Union. He has maintained that his record belies such charges; he has always defended the Soviet Union as a workers' state, even though he has found it necessary to attack the Stalin²³ bureaucracy.

As regards the technique for destroying the bureaucracy, Trotsky has offered no blueprints. He has set himself down on record, he has declared, despite the accusations at the Moscow Trials as a firm opponent of terrorism, in any of its forms.²⁴ He has planned no march on Moscow, nor any other form of adventurous putsch. When he has convinced the workers of Russia of the correctness of his position, through the building up of a new political party in the Soviet Union, the method of ousting the Stalin bureaucracy will be found.

" . . . The question of seizing power will arise as a practical question for the new party only when it will have consolidated around itself the majority of the working class. . . . When the proletariat springs into action, the Stalinist apparatus will remain suspended in mid-air. Should it still attempt to resist, it will then be necessary to apply against it not the measures of civil war, but rather measures of police character. In any case, what will be involved is not armed insurrection against the dictatorship of the proletariat but the removal of a malignant growth upon it."²⁵

²³Trotsky, Problems of the Development of the U.S.S.R., pp. 3,42; In Defense of the Soviet Union, passim.

²⁴Trotsky, Kirov Assassination, pp. 16-17; History of the Russian Revolution, Vol. I, pp. 355, 480-481.

²⁵Trotsky, The Soviet Union and the Fourth International, p. 25.

CHAPTER XXXV

THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY -- STRATEGY AND TACTICS

Trotsky has thus distinguished between strategy and tactics:

" . . . By the conception of tactics is understood the system of measures that serves a single current task or a single branch of the class struggle. Revolutionary strategy on the contrary embraces a combined system of actions which by their association, consistency, and growth must lead the proletariat to the conquest of power."¹

Tactics is therefore concerned with day-to-day class struggle activities; strategy, on the other hand, is the broader, more embracing concept which lays the foundation and provides the framework for the tactical methods pursued. In his many theoretical studies, Trotsky has declared that the former must always be subordinated to and take its directives from the latter.²

Although the distinction between the two is fundamental, strategy and tactics are closely interrelated. In the pages which follow, no attempt will be made to keep a sharp division, particularly since the literature of the Trotskyists likewise does not make any hard and fast separation.

The United Front³

General Features. It is the contention of the Trotskyists that the correct approach to common action with other working class political parties and trade union organizations is found in the united front tactic. Its implicit premises are these: despite the existence of differences in philos-

¹Trotsky, Third International After Lenin, p. 75.

²Ibid., p. 76.

³For an early theoretical statement, see Trotsky, "The Question of the United Front," New International (July, 1938), Vol. IV, No. 7, pp. 216-218; (Aug., 1938), Vol. IV, No. 8, pp. 250-252.

ophy, strategy and tactics among the various working class organizations, agreement upon a fundamental minimum working class program is both possible and necessary not only as a defense against fascism but for the advancement of the interests of the proletariat as well. United front agreements are generally reached as the result of negotiations entered into by the leadership of the various working class organizations. The agreements are usually on specific issues for specific purposes. Each organization retains its own identity, acts under its own banner, and accepts the discipline of its own leadership. The united front is to be sharply distinguished from organizational unity, united-front-from-below, and the People's Front, all of which the Trotskyists have rejected.

The Trotskyists have declared that the united front attempts to steer a course between organizational unity and united-front-from-below on the one hand, and the People's Front on the other, both involving hazards which they wish to avoid. The significant feature of the united front is that, unlike the People's Front, it is composed strictly of working class organizations, and that it stands upon a working class platform.

" . . . The S.W.P. stands for and advocates broad, honest, carefully defined united fronts of organizations on specific issues facing the workers, in which each organization, loyally adhering to the united front, retains its political and organizational independence, and its right to criticism either for failure to carry out the united front agreement or on questions of program and principle. Such united front actions develop the mass power of the workers, show the workers the need and value of unity, expose the weakness or treachery of reactionary and reformist leaders, and give the revolutionary party the opportunity to prove in action the correctness of its principles and tactics. United front actions are thus indispensable preparations for the revolutionary unity which, in the revolutionary crisis, will enable the workers to take power."⁴

"To guard these democratic rights and to gain concessions from the capitalist class, revolutionary socialists advocate the tactic of the united front as against the tactics of the Popular Front. We recognize that the

⁴Socialist Workers Party, Declaration of Principles and Constitution, p. 28.

workers do not all follow one party or one organization. There are different organizations with different programs, but all working-class organizations and parties have common interests in achieving immediate objectives and accomplishing specific tasks. To prevent the victory of fascism, and to gain better conditions of labor, are tasks which should bring all workers together, regardless of their differences in program. The united front tactic serves the purpose of uniting all working-class organizations for some specific objective without in the least interfering with the right of each organization to propagate its ideas outside of the united front. Revolutionary socialists have no objection to middle class elements joining such a united front, but the leadership and control must remain in the hands of working-class organizations."⁵

"'Class against class!' This means, all organizations of the proletariat must take their place in the united front against the bourgeoisie.

"The practical program of the united front is determined by agreements with organizations in the eyes of the masses. Every organization remains under its own banner and its own leadership. Every organization obeys in action the discipline of the united front.

"'Class against class!' Indefatigable agitation must be conducted in order that the social democratic organizations and the reformist trade unions break off with the perfidious bourgeois allies in 'Iron Front' and that they join in common with the Communists and all other organizations of the proletariat.

"'Class against class!' Propaganda and organizational preparation for WORKERS' SOVIETS, as the highest forms of the proletarian united front."⁶

Since Trotskyists, moreover, have regarded themselves as the vanguard of class conscious workers, they have hoped, in the course of united front agreements and programs to demonstrate to workers the correctness of their principles, strategy and tactics, and thereby to win them over to S.W.P.'s more advanced, and correct political orientation. Trotsky has given the following as the correct conception of the united front, which, he has pointed out, was first advanced by the Comintern in its more auspicious days:

" . . . : the Communist party proves to the masses and their organizations its readiness in action to wage battle in common with them, for aims, no matter how modest, so long as they lie on the road of the historical development of the proletariat; the Communist party in this struggle takes into account the actual condition of the class at each given moment; it turns not to the masses only, but also to those organizations whose leadership is recognized by the masses; it confronts the reformist organizations

⁵Goldman, What Is Socialism? p. 21.

⁶Trotsky, What Next? p. 190.

before the eyes of the masses with the real problems of the class struggle. The policy of the united front hastens the revolutionary development of the class by revealing in the open that the common struggle is undermined not by the disruptive acts of the Communist party but by the conscious sabotage of the leaders of the social democracy. It is absolutely clear that these conceptions could in no sense have become obsolete."⁷

"The identity, in principle, of the interests of the proletariat and of the aims of the Communist party does not mean either that the proletariat as a whole is, even today, conscious of its class interests, or that the party under all conditions formulates them correctly. The very need of the party originates in the very fact that the proletariat is not born with the innate understanding of its historical interests. The task of the party consists in learning, from experience deprived from the struggle, how to demonstrate to the proletariat its right to leadership. . . ."⁸

Finally, Trotsky has observed, to achieve a united front is an exceedingly difficult task; as desirable as it may be, it should not be entered upon in the spirit of unity at all costs; united front agreements must be principled or not at all. "Unity is a magnificent thing, but not on a rotted foundation."⁹

" . . . For the Marxists, the united front policy is merely one of the methods in the course of the class struggle. Under certain conditions this method becomes completely useless; it would be absurd to want to conclude an agreement with the reformists on the socialist upheaval. But there are conditions under which the rejection of the united front may ruin the revolutionary party for many decades to come. . . ."¹⁰

"The united front policy on a national scale is ten times harder than on a local scale. The united front policy on an international scale is a hundred times harder than on a national scale. To unite with the British reformists around so general a slogan as 'defense of the U.S.S.R.' or 'defense of the Chinese revolution', is to talk the blue out of the sky. . . ."¹¹

Asked whether organic unity of the Socialist and Communist parties was possible, Trotsky replied that under certain conditions it would be tenable; but the People's Front policies of the Communist parties had made it out of the question.

⁷Ibid., pp. 72-73.

⁸Ibid., pp. 44-45.

⁹Trotsky, Whither France? p. 111.

¹⁰Trotsky, The Only Road, p. 60.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 56-57.

"Some comrades will ask us, not without indignation, 'Would you be against organic unity?'"

"No, we are not against unity. But we are against fetishism, superstition and blindness. Unity in itself solves nothing. . . . What decides the issue is not unity itself but its actual political content."¹²

"But unification -- let us be clear about this point -- would be a step backward, even a step towards the abyss, if in the new party the struggle against opportunism were directed in the channels of the Communist International. The Stalinist apparatus is capable of exploiting a victorious revolution, but it is organically incapable of assuring the victory of a new revolution. It is conservative to its marrow. . . ."¹³

United Front versus People's Front.¹⁴ Trotskyists have sharply distinguished the united front from the People's Front: the former involves participation of working class groups under working class leadership with a strict working class program; the latter, on the other hand, includes middle class groups as well, usually under their leadership and involving a program satisfactory to them. Although the Trotskyist conception and analysis of the People's Front will be presented in considerable detail, the general attitude taken by them may be tersely summarized in these words:

"The united front of working-class organizations opens the way to victory; the Popular or People's Front leads to inevitable defeat."¹⁵

Tasks of the United Front. The Trotskyists have considered the following among the chief tasks of the united front: (1) to carry on the struggle for the realization of the immediate needs of the working class in the political (freedom of speech, press, assembly, etc.) and economic (higher wages, shorter hours, better working conditions, etc.) arena; (2) to prepare to carry on the struggle for power when objective conditions pave the way for a revolutionary situation.

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¹²Trotsky, Whither France? pp. 108-109.

¹³Idem.

¹⁴Swabeck, "The Real Meaning of the United Front," New International Oct., 1935), Vol. II, No. 6, pp. 180-182.

¹⁵Goldman, op. cit., p. 21.

Trade Union Position¹

The Socialist Workers party has recognized that its activities in the trade union movement are vital to the growth and development of the party. It has therefore formulated policies for trade union activity which it believes will enable it to give leadership to the trade union movement and will at the same time contribute towards the growth of its own political organization.

"The trade unions are the elementary and basic organs of working class defense against capitalist aggression; and of all trade unions, the most important are those of the workers in the large shops, mills, factories and mines of the basic industries. The primary field of Party work is trade union activity."²

"The most important single field of activity of the revolutionary proletarian party is the trade unions. Unless the party is deeply rooted in the basic economic organizations of the working class, and is inseparably associated with them in their daily struggles, it can be, at best, a literary propagandist group but not a living revolutionary political party of the proletariat, able to lead the latter in the decisive struggle for power. The party that is divorced from the trade union movement and its daily work, is doomed to sterility and disintegration. This is especially true in the United States at the present time."³

"The Communist party is the fundamental weapon of revolutionary action of the proletariat, the combat organization of its vanguard that must raise itself to the role of leader of the working class in all the spheres of its struggle without exception, and consequently, in the trade union field."⁴

"The ideology of trade union independence has nothing in common with the ideas and sentiments of the proletariat as a class. If the party, by its direction, is capable of assuring a correct, clear-sighted and firm policy in the trade unions, not a single worker will have the idea of rebelling against the leadership of the party. The historical experience of the Bolsheviks has proved that."⁵

" . . . , the Communists have no reason, either in their ideology or their organization, to hide themselves behind the trade unions. They do

¹Socialist Appeal, Feb. 5, 1938, pp. 2,4; Feb. 12, 1938, p. 2; Feb. 19, 1938, p. 2; Nov. 26, 1938, p. 5. Socialist Workers Party, op. cit., pp. 20-21.

²Socialist Workers Party, op. cit., p. 20.

³Socialist Appeal, Feb. 5, 1938, p. 2.

⁴Trotsky, Communism and Syndicalism, p. 23.

⁵Ibid., p. 31.

not misuse the trade unions for machinations behind the scenes. They do not in any way disturb the independent development of the trade unions, and support them in action in every respect. But at the same time, the Communist party reserves the right of expressing its opinion on all questions in the labor movement, including the trade union question, to criticize trade union tactics, to make definite proposals to the trade unions, which, on their part, are at liberty to accept or reject these proposals. The party strives to win the confidence of the working class, above all, of that section organized in the trade union."⁶

"The correctly understood task of the Communist party does not consist solely of gaining influence over the trade unions, such as they are, but in winning, through the trade unions, an influence over the majority of the working class. This is possible only if the methods employed by the party in the trade unions corresponded to the nature of the tasks of the latter. The struggle for influence of the party in the trade unions finds its objective verification in the fact that they do or do not thrive, and in the fact that the number of their members increases, as well as in their relations with the broadest masses. If the party buys its influence in the trade unions only at the price of a narrowing down and a factionalizing of the latter -- converting them into auxiliaries of the party for momentary aims and preventing them from becoming genuine mass organizations -- the relations between the party and the class are wrong. . . ."⁷

Trade Union Unity.⁸ Trotskyists have urged that a divided labor movement makes the working class impotent against its enemies, and renders resistance against a rising fascist movement weak and ineffective. It has therefore attempted to work for unity in the labor movement.

"The party stands for trade union unity, since a divided trade union movement weakens the defensive strength of the workers against reaction, and facilitates the coming of Fascism. The Party does not, however, make a fetish of 'unity at all costs'. While against the policy of building paper 'red unions', as advocated by the Stalinists in the so-called 'Third Period', and in favor of working within the genuine existing unions which are for the most part reformist in policy and leadership, the Party recognizes that special circumstances may have brought about the development of genuine unions outside the chief central trade union body or bodies, and in such cases it supports those independent trade unions while working for their re-integration into the main stream of the labor movement; and where the existing central body or bodies refuse to organize in a given field, the Party favors its organization in any case on a temporarily independent basis."⁹

⁶Ibid., p. 15.

⁷Ibid., pp. 34-35.

⁸Widick, "The Question of Trade Union Unity," New International (Jan., 1938), Vol. IV, No. 1, pp. 13-15.

⁹Socialist Workers Party, op. cit., p. 20.

In fighting for unity, the S.W.P. has nevertheless found it necessary to condemn the reactionary leadership and policies of both the A.F.L. and the C.I.O.¹⁰ It has proposed to offer its leadership to bring about unity under the following conditions:

" . . . There can be only one kind of unity which has real validity for the revolutionary socialist. It is unity of the workers against the bosses, under a program that advances the basic interests of the workers, namely a program of class struggle. Our task, in the coming period, consists in fighting for a unity of the labor movement which includes (1) democracy in all unions; (2) militant class struggle policies against the bosses; (3) recognition of the rights, if not the superiority, of industrial unionism. In struggling for these demands in the coming period, the revolutionary socialists can not only win to their ranks the militant and progressive workers but can prepare the working class for its historic mission -- the revolutionary overthrow of American capitalism."¹¹

In the matter of organization, the Socialist Workers party has given its approval to the industrial rather than craft form of labor organization as conducive to stronger and more extensive unionization of American workers.¹²

Fraction Work in Trade Unions.¹³ In a general way, Trotskyists have used the same technique and fundamental approach developed by the Communist International while Trotsky was still one of its active and influential members. All Trotskyists are obliged to be members of the union which has been developed in their particular trade, craft or profession. Those belonging to the same union meet separately to consider the general policies which should be advocated within the union to make the union more militant and progressive in its outlook. The fractions, as they are called, also aim to give leadership and direction to the union, but not to "dominate" it as a distinct political tendency and make the union a tail-end to their political party. Wherever possible, they endeavor to enlist the more ad-

¹⁰ Socialist Appeal, Feb. 12, 1938, p. 2.

¹¹ Widick, op. cit., p. 15.

¹² Socialist Appeal, Feb. 5, 1938, p. 2. Socialist Workers Party, op.cit., p. 20.

¹³ Socialist Appeal, Feb. 19, 1938, p. 2.

vanced, class-conscious members of the unions for membership in the Socialist Workers party.

"Every effort must be made immediately to have every eligible non-trade unionist in the party join the union of his trade or industry and take an active part in its life.

"Wherever two or more members of the party and the YPSL belong to the same union, they are to constitute themselves a party trade union fraction, to work under the direction of the trade union department of the party.

"Where no union exists for a given trade or industry, in a given locality, our comrades must take the initiative in organizing the unorganized."¹⁴

Trade Union Program. The Trotskyists have attempted to base their trade union program upon a number of important fundamental conceptions: militant class struggle policies; trade union democracy; organization of a left wing bloc to carry on the fight for correct principles and to oppose the opportunist policies introduced into the trade unions by supporters of the Communist party.¹⁵

"In trade union policy, the Party stands for the methods of militant class struggle; the organization of the unorganized; industrial unionism; in all fields where this is feasible; and broad inner union democracy. The Party fights against policies of class collaborationism, against bureaucratism, gangsterism and racketeering, and against reliance on the government and governmental agencies. The Party, while in no degree relaxing its support of the unions, and their struggles, fights also against those forces within the unions which carry out these reactionary policies; against trade union bureaucracy and against all other reactionary tendencies in the unions -- in particular against Stalin. The Party stands for the closest cooperation between the trade unions and the unemployed, for their common interest, and opposes any discrimination against the unemployed workers."¹⁶

The Socialist Workers party has proposed the following program as the basis for a Left Wing progressive bloc in the trade unions:

"Against class collaboration and for a policy of class struggle.

"For the fullest inner-union democracy for all members of the union and for all groups. . . .

"For the normal functioning of all unions and against bureaucratically

¹⁴Idem.

¹⁵Idem.

¹⁶Socialist Workers Party, op. cit., p. 20.

appointed organizers and leaderships such as prevail in most of the 'Organizing Committees' of the C.I.O. For immediate holding of conventions, adoption of constitution and policies, and democratic selection of the leadership.

"For the shop and steward and shop committee system throughout the industries, integrated into the trade unions.

"Against any attempt to 'incorporate' the trade unions, against all 'government regulation' of the trade unions, and in general, against all attempts to deprive the unions of the complete class independence by subordinating them to the apparatus of the government, which is only a machine for defending the interests of the capitalist class.

"For defense against the government, the employers and the trade union bureaucracy of the vital weapon of the strike, including the sit-in strikes.

"For the amalgamation of all craft unions in a given industry into industrial unions.

"Against high initiation fees and prohibitive dues systems, especially in the present period of unemployment and crisis. Against the dropping of unemployed members from the rolls for inability to pay the regular dues required.

"For the defense by the trade unions of the interests of the unemployed. For the organization of the unemployed by the trade unions themselves. . . ."¹⁷

The Farmer-Labor Party

The attitude taken by the Trotskyists on the question of the Farmer-Labor party in the United States falls into two separate periods: prior to 1938, the official party position was in sharp opposition to the initiation and support of any such movement; after 1938, the Socialist Workers party gave its support to the broad movement already prevalent in the many sections of the country for the development of a Farmer-Labor party.

Prior to 1938. From their early organization until 1938, the Trotskyists were opposed to the organization of a Labor or Farmer-Labor party in the United States. They held that it was theoretically impermissible under the circumstances for disciples of Marx and Lenin to be active in the formation of such a movement. It was their contention that a Labor or Farmer-Labor party, by its very attempt to enlist within it all workers (and farm-

¹⁷ Socialist Appeal, Feb. 19, 1938, p. 2.

laborers) must offer an extremely watered-down program to bring everybody within the fold; the result would inevitably be a reformist party with a bankrupt approach: the ills of the working class can be solved within the structure of the present social order. Such a party cannot be expected to play an important, no less decisive, role in the destruction of the capitalist system.¹

"The teachings of Marxism with respect to reformist parties are unambiguous. . . . Marxism -- and it is this that is fundamental -- teaches further that reformist parties, in every crucial situation, function as agents of the bourgeoisie within the working class. When war is declared, under whatever specious pretext the reformist parties go over to the side of the war and become the most effective agencies for the war within the working class. In a revolutionary crisis, the reformist parties always end by joining the bourgeoisie to suppress the revolutionary organs and leadership, and attempt to keep control of the masses and the state in order to hand them back to the bourgeoisie. Thus, from the point of view of Marxism, reformist parties are not merely non-revolutionary but anti-revolutionary."²

Another theoretical point which the Trotskyists adduced was that there is no inevitability in the idea of a Labor party. Accepting Trotsky's law of combined development, they maintained that it was possible to skip the Labor party stage in the political development of the working class and go directly from the old political parties to a revolutionary working class party, given correct tactics, strategy and basic orientation.

" . . . The idea that such a development is 'inevitable', that the working class in every country 'must' pass through such a stage, has no basis in reality and less grounds continually as the tempo of capitalist decline increases. . . ."³

As a practical matter, they also argued, the Labor party offered many difficulties. The likelihood of the development of a genuine labor party in the United States was small, for many reasons. First there was the trade

¹Burnham, "On a Labor Party", Party Affairs (February, 1937), Vol. I, No. 2, pp. 6-11. Socialist Appeal, March, 1937, pp. 42-43.

²Burnham, op. cit., p. 7.

³Ibid., p. 10.

union officialdom and bureaucracy. Those at the helm of the trade union movement in the United States were extremely conservative, reactionary and self-seeking. Such leadership could be won over to the support of a labor party only on the basis of a capitalist program which at best was mildly reformist.⁴ What was more likely, however, was that this type of leadership would strive its utmost to keep out of the labor party the only elements which could give it a genuine working class philosophy and program and would fight to accelerate the class-consciousness of the American workers both along political and economic lines.⁵ They alleged that the beginnings of the labor party movement in the United States had already shown these unhealthy symptoms. Signposts had been set up at the threshold of the new organization which in effect read: Communists, Socialists and all members of revolutionary movements, keep out; only unaffiliated workers lacking political orientation wanted. This is what the American Labor Party of New York had told the Socialist party and other organizations which had hoped for a party organized on a federated basis.

" . . . If you want to play 'Labor party politics' with us you can do so only on condition that you dissolve your party and enter our party on our terms, namely, join as individuals, without an independent program or conception, uncritically, and with the pledge of acquiescence in whatever the private proprietors of our party propose."⁶

A concrete analysis of the American scene further disclosed, it was said, that the three bases for a genuine labor party had proved unable to accomplish the task which they had set for themselves: the Farmer-Labor Party of Minnesota was totally without prestige even among the farmers and workers in Minnesota; the Labor Non-Partisan League had been formed exclu-

⁴Ibid., p. 8.

⁵Schachtman, "Prospects for a Labor Party," Socialist Appeal (February, 1937), Vol. III, No. 2, pp. 13-14.

⁶Ibid., p. 16.

sively to get Roosevelt elected; the American Labor Party of New York was under the thumb of trade-union bureaucrats which feared a genuine workers' party.⁷

All in all, concluded the Trotskyists, there was no theoretical or practical basis upon which to work for the formation of a labor party; instead, it was the duty of Trotskyists to build a revolutionary workers' party instead. If it should turn out, however, that a labor party did get under way, Trotskyists did not propose to remain isolated from it. Under such circumstances, they were prepared to give it "critical support".⁸

"What does 'critical support' mean? It means briefly this: We have said to the workers that the only kind of party which will lead to the solution of their problems is a revolutionary Socialist Party. They are not yet ready to believe us, and, under the influence of reformist leaders, set up a Labor Party. We then say to them: you do not agree with us; you think a Labor Party will answer your needs; very well, we will go through this experience loyally with you -- as we would go through the experience of an incorrectly called strike -- and you will discover in your own experience that you have been misinformed and misled, and that a Labor Party is of no use to you in your struggle; and meanwhile we will continue to put forward our ideas and our program, and to urge you to become part of our organization embodying those ideas and that program. Such a position is perfectly straightforward and perfectly comprehensible. It should be understood, of course, that from our point of view the object of a position of critical support is to shift the workers out of the false road of the reformist Labor Party in the speediest possible way, not to reinforce their direction in it. And such a position is the only form of 'support' which will enable present or future Labor Party developments to be utilized . . ."⁹

In short the Trotskyists, although opposed in principle to the Labor/Farmer-Labor party, did not thereby consider the matter a closed one. They said they were prepared to re-examine the question again if circumstances warranted it. In the meantime they proposed to make their major contacts with the working class in the trade unions and mass struggle organizations.

⁷Idem.

⁸Burnham, The Labor Party: 1938, New International (March, 1938), Vol. IV, No. 3, pp. 71-73. Socialist Workers Party, op. cit., pp. 18-19.

⁹Burnham, "On a Labor Party," Party Affairs, (February, 1937), Vol. I, No. 2, pp. 9-10.

Since 1938. About August, 1938, the issue of the Labor party was raised anew in the Socialist Workers party. A large section of the party felt the need for a new orientation and a more positive attitude on the problem. The question was debated in the New International (and among party members generally), Burnham, Schachtman and Goldman presenting the new thesis¹⁰ and Draper defending the position hitherto held.¹¹

The following viewpoint was expressed by the spokesmen for a new orientation:

"A study of the development of our position indicates that we based ourselves on two alternatives. If there is no mass reformist party, or movement for it, we do not initiate or form one as a substitute for the revolutionary party, but build the latter directly as a mass party. Where a mass Labor party does exist, we, to whom sectarianism is alien, are flexible in our tactics and, generally, give critical support to such a party; and, as is known, we followed this course in Minnesota where there is an established Farmer-Labor party, supported by the mass of the unions.

"But our analysis was incomplete, and in some respects, not sufficiently clear. It did not allow for the present stage of development, in which an undeveloped and only partly conscious mass movement exists and is torn by warring tendencies of progress and reaction, but is not yet crystallized. A contributory cause preventing us from supplementing our analysis was the need of concentrating our attention and attack upon the reformist Labor party conceptions of the right wingers and centrists in the old Socialist party, in connection, particularly, with the problem of the A.L.P. which originated not as a break-away from the old parties, but as a machine to break the advanced and traditional socialist influence upon the New York workers and to corral the labor vote for an old capitalist party and ticket.

"In brief, our old position cannot and does not effectively answer the problems raised by the present stage of development. It cannot even in theory, for the reason that the new situation was not clearly allowed for. More decisive is the fact that practise has also demonstrated its inadequacy, and consequently, the fact that it does not permit us to give concrete answers, not only as are understandable and acceptable to the masses, but as will develop more speedily their class consciousness, their break with the bourgeoisie and its parties, and also with their petty bourgeois leaders."¹²

¹⁰Burnham and Schachtman, "The Question of a Labor Party: The Challenge and the Answer," New International (Aug., 1938), Vol. IV, No. 8, pp. 227-229. Goldman, "Labor Party and Progress," New International (Sept., 1938), Vol. IV, No. 9, pp. 279-280.

¹¹Draper, "The Question of a Labor Party: For the Present Party Position," New International (Aug., 1938), Vol. IV, No. 8, pp. 229-231.

¹²Burnham and Schachtman, op. cit., p. 228.

"Our old position, irrespective of whether it was right or wrong, or of what specific position we adopt now, must be brought up to date. We advocate a positive policy, one that is based upon the present reality, as well as the objective needs of the working class."¹³

"Let us put it more concretely. We are not the advocates of a Labor party 'in general', in the abstract, or even of the Labor party as it now stands. We say to the workers: You want to break from the capitalist parties, to form a party of your own? Excellent! That is a step forward, it is progressive. Such a step we will support, we will urge all workers to do likewise. A political party is formed to take control of the affairs of the nation, and we are for the workers taking such control. But -- you cannot take control and impose your will and interests by means of a reformist program and tactics or under a reformist leadership. That is demonstrated by the experiences in England; right now in the United States; in fact, throughout the world. We of the S.W.P. are a revolutionary party. We therefore propose to you, not a program of petty reforms which the deepening crisis prevents from really improving your conditions; not a program of reforms for reconciling you with your hateful class enemy and its bankrupt social order; but a program of revolutionary transitional demands which corresponds at once to your needs and desires and to the objective situation. We propose, in order to advance the Labor party movement toward class struggle and not class collaboration, that you adopt a program calling for workers' control of production, for militant Labor Defense Guards to protect our democratic rights and combat fascism, for the expropriation of the industrial and financial dictators of the country, etc., etc.

"This is our program. If the workers do not adopt it as a whole or at all, we continue to give support to the Labor party, but critical support. We are not sectarians or ultimatists. We give the labor movement no ultimatum: Accept our program, join our party or we will have nothing to do with you. On the other hand, we accept no ultimatums, even from the labor movement. We have our views, and if labor does not accept them in full, we continue our comradely criticism and do not make our own the inadequacies or mistakes of the working class; but support unmistakably every progressive step, even small ones. In this way, we help to revolutionize the mass movement, and to make a mass movement out of the revolutionary party. There is no other way.

"Our main aim is to build the revolutionary party, and all tactics must subserve this aim. The Labor party tactic is not, of course, given for all time. It is imperative for the period ahead. . . ."¹⁴

The argument in opposition to joining the Labor party was detailed in its analysis. A significant portion ran thus:

"The line of the majority is: there is now a mass movement for a Labor party, and we have to be in; the easiest way to get in is to ourselves

¹³ Idem.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 229.

come out as advocates of a Labor party; and once in, we can put forward the transitional program in order that it may be carried out by the Labor party.

"It is our opinion that the existence of a mass movement for something we don't want (whether it be war or a labor party) doesn't change our minds about not wanting it. If it is true that a Labor party can play only a reactionary role in society today, then precisely because of the illusions in the minds of the workers, it is our duty to speak out the truth about it. Otherwise the disillusionment with the Labor party will react upon us too.

"What then? Does speaking the truth about the Labor party doom us to isolation from the 'mass movement'? Nonsense!

"Even if we advocate a Labor party we can have influence only in proportion to the extent and effectiveness of our work in the trade unions, and our fractions in the Labor party movement -- i.e., only in so far as we seriously undertake and carry through mass work. This is the key. As long as we have our roots in the union movement we cannot be isolated, no matter what position we take on the Labor party."¹⁵

Following considerable, inner-party discussion and a party referendum,¹⁶
the new position on the Labor party was adopted.

"Consequently, the Socialist Workers Party gives positive and unambiguous support to the labor party movement in general and to all its local manifestations. . . ."¹⁷

Program for a Farmer-Labor Party.¹⁸ The program offered for a Farmer-Labor party by the S.W.P. has corresponded, in the main, with its program of immediate demands, which will be presented in a later section.¹⁹

The Negro Question

The Socialist Workers party has condemned the exploitation of Negroes in the United States in strong terms. It has also condemned the practice of American capitalists of accentuating race and color differences among workers to prevent unity and organization. It has attacked their alleged hypocrisy in deploring Jewish programs in Germany while they have permitted

¹⁵Draper, op. cit., p. 231.

¹⁶Socialist Appeal, Oct. 1, 1938, p. 4.

¹⁷Idem.

¹⁸Socialist Workers Party, Minnesota Section, The Farmer Labor Party. A Program, passim. Socialist Appeal, Feb. 14, 1939, p. 4.

¹⁹Discussed infra.

the lynching of Negroes in the United States. The position of the S.W.P. is that only revolutionary socialism will usher in a new type of society which alone can bring emancipation.¹

" . . . The S.W.P. stands for the complete equality of the Negroes and all other races, and will fight against every form of race discrimination -- economic, political, social, against wage differentials, lynching, Jim Crowism, the barring of Negroes and other racial groups from the trade unions, discrimination against them where they are in unions, and all other forms of racial and national chauvinism. At the same time it points out that the Negro masses cannot achieve deliverance by reliance upon Negro capitalists or middle class Negroes or upon so-called 'Negro capitalism'. Only by the complete abolition of capitalism will the Negroes gain freedom from discrimination, exploitation and tyranny."²

Program of Immediate Demands

The reasons why the greater number of Marxian political parties have put up a militant fight to obtain concessions for the working class in the here-and-now have already been indicated in discussing the program of immediate demands advanced by the other political movements. Although they too have presented such a program, the Trotskyists have warned against the dangers involved in this work. At no time, they have declared, should immediate demands be placed ahead of the revolution; otherwise the result is the abandonment of Marxism-Leninism for a policy of opportunism which retards rather than advances the objective for which revolutionists work.

In the United States, the Trotskyists have formulated the following as a program of immediate demands not inconsistent with their ultimate goal and objectives:¹

- "1. A job and a decent wage for every worker.
2. Open the idle factories--operate them under workers' control.
3. A Twenty-Billion dollar Federal public works and housing program.

¹Socialist Workers Party, op. cit., p. 22. Socialist Appeal, Dec. 3, 1938, p. 4. Wright, "Shifts in the Negro Question," New International (Nov., 1934), Vol. I, No. 4, pp. 113-115.

²Socialist Workers Party, op. cit., p. 22.

¹Socialist Workers Party, Minnesota Section, op. cit., pp. 5-12. Preis, America's Permanent Depression, pp. 14-16. Socialist Appeal, Dec. 24, 1938, p. 1.

4. Thirty-thirty! \$30-weekly minimum wage--30-hour weekly maximum for all workers on all jobs.
5. Thirty dollar weekly old-age and disability pension.
6. Expropriate the Sixty Families.
7. All war funds to the unemployed.
8. A people's referendum on any and all wars.
9. No secret diplomacy.
10. An independent Labor party.
11. Workers Defense Guards against Vigilante and Fascist attacks."²

Miscellaneous Aspects of Strategy

In preparation for a revolutionary crisis, the Trotskyists have considered the following significant strategic principles as guides to action: building workers' defense guards; disarming the fascists and arming the workers; preparation for the general strike; building workers' soviets.

Workers Defense Guards. The S.W.P. has taken the position that in order to destroy incipient fascism, it is necessary to organize strong workers' defense guards because capitalist authorities will not protect workers from fascist attacks.¹ Many officers in the army and navy, members of the police, cabinet officers, etc., are secretly in sympathy with fascist aims, and if not, at any rate, regard the fascist movement as a counterpoise to the growing revolutionary spirit of the working class. Thus, the only effective agency for crushing fascism is the vanguard of the workers who must physically disarm and break up fascists bands and organizations if they show themselves.

"There can be only one answer to the fascist gangs: mobilization of the most devoted trade union members into well-trained contingents of UNION Guards. No form of legislation can throw back the fascist gangsters, for they do not obey legislation. No courts can stop them (even if the reactionary judges were not secretly sympathetic to the fascists), for the fascists do not obey judicial edicts. The police look the other way when

²Socialist Appeal, Feb. 14, 1939, p. 4.

¹Socialist Appeal, Feb. 28, 1939, p. 1; March 14, 1939, p. 3.

these capitalist hirelings assault workers. The National Guard is absolutely untrustworthy as was demonstrated by their strike-breaking role -- in spite of the wishes of Governor Olson -- during the drivers' strikes of 1934. No, there is only one agency which can stop the fascists, and that is workers themselves, through the Union Guards."²

" . . . And who will disarm the same police who with the right hand will give back to the Fascists what they will have taken from them with the left? The comedy of disarmament by the police will only have caused the authority of the Fascists to increase as fighters against the capitalist state. . . ."³

Arming the Workers. The Socialist Workers party in the United States has not advocated the arming of workers in their present stage of development. In general though, Trotsky has held that workers must be armed and organized into a workers' militia. The basis of this militia must be the factory workers, supplemented by the farm workers. There must be no secret about such a demand, although the technique itself for arming the workers need not be publicized.⁴

"The fundamental cadres of the militia must be the factory workers grouped according to their place of work, known to each other and able to protect their combat detachments against the provocations of the enemy agents far more easily and more surely than the most elevated bureaucrats . . ."⁵

" . . . We need tens and later hundreds of thousands of fighters. They will come only if millions of men and women workers, and behind them the peasants, understand the necessity for the militia and create around the volunteers an atmosphere of ardent sympathy and active support. Conspiratorial care can and must develop only the technical aspect of the matter. The political campaign must be openly developed, in meetings, factories, in the streets and on the public squares."⁶

Trotsky has been very critical of those who maintain that such conduct as arming the workers accentuates the class struggle and hence leads to greater repression. He has said:

²Socialist Workers Party, Minnesota Section, op. cit., pp. 12-13.

³Trotsky, Whither France? p. 22.

⁴Ibid., pp. 24-34.

⁵Ibid., p. 31.

⁶Idem.

"'To call for the organization of a militia,' say some opponents who, to be sure, are the least serious and honest, 'is to engage in provocation.' This is not an argument but an insult. If the necessity for the defense of the workers' organizations flows from the whole situation, how then can one not call for the creation of the militia? Perhaps they mean to say that the creation of a militia 'provokes' Fascist attacks and government repression. In that case this is an absolutely reactionary argument. Liberalism has always said to the workers that by their class struggle they 'provoke' the reaction.

"The reformists repeated this accusation against the Marxists, the Mensheviks against the Bolsheviks. These accusations reduced themselves, in the final analysis, to the profound thought that if the oppressed do not balk, the oppressors will not be obliged to beat them. This is the philosophy of Tolstoy and Gandhi but never that of Marx and Lenin. . . ."7

Trotsky has not given any blueprints for the creation of a workers' militia and its arming. He believes that once the need is realized, the arms will be forthcoming.

"The proletariat produces arms, transports them, erects the buildings in which they are kept, defends these buildings against itself, serves in the army and creates all its equipment. It is neither locks nor walls which separate the proletariat from arms, but the habit of submission, the hypnosis of class domination and nationalist poison.

"It is sufficient to destroy these psychological walls -- and no wall of stone will stand in the way. It is enough that the proletariat should want arms -- and it will find them. The task of the revolutionary party is to awaken this desire and to facilitate its realization."8

"In addition to other sources, the workers can arm themselves at the expense of the Fascists by systematically disarming them.

"This is now one of the most serious forms of the struggle against Fascism. . . .

"But how to disarm the Fascists? Naturally, it is impossible to do so with newspaper articles alone. Fighting squads must be created. An intelligence service must be established. Thousands of informers and friendly helpers will volunteer from all sides when they realize that the business has been seriously undertaken by us. It requires a will to proletarian action."9

The General Strike. In a crisis, the Trotskyists have pointed out, the workers must be prepared for a general strike. To succeed, it must be more than a spontaneous gesture, but must be carefully planned and worked out in

⁷Ibid., p. 26.

⁸Ibid., p. 36.

⁹Ibid., p. 32.

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detail.

" . . . A general strike, if it is not to be a mere demonstration, implies a tremendous upheaval of society, and in any case puts to hazard the fate of a political regime and the reputation of the revolutionary class force. One may undertake a general strike only when the working class, and, in the first place, its advance-guard, are prepared to carry the struggle through to the end. . . ."¹¹

"The general strike, as every Marxist knows, is one of the most revolutionary methods of struggle. The general strike is not possible except at a time when the class struggle rises above particular and craft demands, and extends over all occupational and district divisions, and wipes away the lines and the parties, between legality and illegality, and mobilizes the majority of the proletariat in an active opposition to the bourgeoisie and the state. Nothing can be on a higher plane than the general strike, except the armed insurrection. The entire history of the working class movement proves that every general strike, whatever may be the slogans under which it occurs, has an internal tendency to transform itself into an open revolutionary class, into a direct struggle for power. In other words: the general strike is not possible except under the conditions of extreme political tension, and that is why it is always the incontestable expression of the revolutionary character of the situation. . . ."¹²

Trotskyists have warned that the nature of the general strike must not be misunderstood; it is not a weapon of the offensive but primarily of the defensive. It must be employed only against a superior foe to paralyze it and then, perhaps, turn the general strike into a revolutionary offensive. But where the forces of the proletariat are in the ascendancy, the general strike is not only unnecessary but even may prove harmful.¹³

"Generally speaking, the general strike is the weapon of struggle of the weaker against the stronger; or, to put it more precisely, of the one who at the beginning of the struggle feels himself weaker against him whom one considers to be the stronger; seeing that I myself cannot make use of an important weapon, I shall try to prevent my opponents using it; if I cannot shoot from cannons, I shall at least remove the gun-locks. Such is the 'idea' of the general strike.

"The general strike was always the weapon of struggle against an entrenched state power that had at its disposal, railroads, telegraph, police and army, etc. By paralyzing the governmental apparatus the general strike either 'scared' the government, or created the postulates for a revolutionary solution of the question of power."¹⁴

¹⁰Trotsky, The Only Road, p. 83.

¹¹Trotsky, Where is Britain Going? p. 82.

¹²Trotsky, Whither France? pp. 79-80.

¹³Trotsky, What Next? pp. 160-165.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 161-162.

Build Workers' Soviets. Trotsky has declared that when the revolutionary crisis nears, the building of workers' soviets is one of the most important and vital tasks facing the united front.

" . . . the Soviets are defined as the organs of struggle for power, as the organs of insurrection, and finally as the organs of dictatorship. Formally these definitions are correct. But they do not at all exhaust the historical function of the Soviets. First of all, they do not explain why in the struggle for power precisely the Soviets are necessary. The answer to this question reads: just as the trade union is the rudimentary form of the united front in the economic struggle, so the Soviet is the highest form of the united front, under the conditions in which the proletariat enters the epoch of fighting for power.

"The Soviet in itself possesses no miraculous powers. It is the class representation of the proletariat, with all of the latter's strong and weak points. But just and only, because of this, does the Soviet afford to the workers of diverse political trends the organizational opportunity to unite their efforts in the revolutionary struggle for power. . . .¹⁵

Trotskyists have held that the soviets make possible the representation of all working class organizations in one authoritative body on a common revolutionary program. The Marxists-Leninists are then given the opportunity of winning all other groups to their position by the correctness of their policies.¹⁶

Trotsky has criticized the failure of the Communist party to make common cause with the German Social Democrats, and consequently build workers' soviets in the pre-Hitler Germany. He regarded this as a most serious error.

"The formation of the first important local Soviet, in which the Communist and social democratic workers would represent not individuals but organizations, would produce a grandiose effect upon the entire German working class. Not only social democratic and non-party workers but also the Catholic and liberal workers would be unable long to resist the pull of the centripetal force. All sections of the German proletariat most adapted to and capable of organization would be drawn to the Soviets, as are iron filings to the poles of a magnet. Within the Soviets, the Communist party would obtain a new and exceptionally favorable arena for fighting for the leading role in the proletarian revolution. . . .¹⁷

¹⁵Ibid., p. 91.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 92-94.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 96.

Opposition to Terrorism

The assassination in 1934 of Kirov, one of Stalin's most trusted aides, by an otherwise obscure communist, Nicolaiev, has given rise to an era of arrests, trials, purges, imprisonments and executions in the U.S.S.R. on a wide and hitherto unprecedented scale. The gist of the charge has been "Trotskyism"; that Trotsky was the center of gravity to which all opponents of Stalin, right and left, were attracted; that that which bound them all together was their hatred of Stalin and their determination to eradicate him from the Russian scene at all costs. In consequence, Trotskyists have been accused of being assassins, saboteurs, wreckers and terrorists who have engaged in collaboration with the German Nazis and Japanese Fascists to achieve their wicked ends.

The detailed nature of the accusations and the answers made by the Trotskyists cannot be examined here;¹ it is sufficient for the purposes at hand to indicate that Trotsky has steadfastly repudiated the tactics of terrorism and has strongly disclaimed any sanction or advocacy of the same. He has consistently maintained that terrorism is contrary to the spirit and traditions of Marxism-Leninism; that it defeats its own ends; that the allegations of terrorism, assassination and violence have been inventions of Stalin to discredit Trotsky in the eyes of the world.²

Trotsky has quoted from one of his own articles written in 1911, where he first set forth his views on the subject:

"... If it is enough to arm oneself with a revolver to reach the goal, what need is there for the strivings of the class struggle? If people in high positions can be intimidated by the noise of an explosion,

¹ Discussed supra.

² Trotsky, The Kirov Assassinations, passim; I Stake My Life, passim.

what need is there then for a party?"³

He has added:

" . . . But if Marxists categorically condemned individual terrorism, obviously for political and not mystical reasons, even when the shots were directed against the agents of the Czarist government and of capitalist exploitation, they will even more relentlessly condemn and reject the criminal adventurism of terrorist acts directed against the bureaucratic representatives of the first workers' state in history. . . ."⁴

On the other hand, Trotsky has maintained, even as terrorism is unnecessary for Oppositionists, it has become indispensable for the "bureaucrats" in order to maintain their hold on the Russian masses.⁵

" . . . No, terror was not necessary for us. On the other hand, it was absolutely necessary for the ruling clique. On the 4th of March, 1929, eight years ago, I wrote: 'Only one thing is left for Stalin: to attempt to draw a line of blood between the official party and the opposition. He absolutely must connect the opposition with attempts at assassination, the preparation of armed insurrection etc.' Remember: Bonapartism has never existed in history without police fabrication of plots!

"The opposition would have to be composed of cretins to think that an alliance with Hitler or the Mikado, both of whom are doomed to defeat in the next war, that such an absurd, inconceivable, senseless alliance could yield to revolutionary Marxists anything but disgrace and ruin. On the other hand, such an alliance -- of the Trotskyists with Hitler -- was most necessary for Stalin. Voltaire says: 'If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him.' The G.P.U. says: 'If the alliance does not exist, it is necessary to fabricate it.'"⁶

The New Deal

Unlike the Communist party which opposed the New Deal at its inception and later supported its program on grounds that Roosevelt's policies had become more progressive, the Trotskyists have maintained throughout an unchanging hostility towards the New Deal and a continued disavowal of its alleged purposes.

³Trotsky, The Kirov Assassination, p. 16.

⁴Ibid., p. 17.

⁵Idem.

⁶Trotsky, I Stake My Life, pp. 9-10.

Basic Analysis.¹ The Trotskyists have held that, in the main, the New Deal is an attempt on the part of a significant section of American capitalism to prevent a moribund system from suffering a complete and final collapse. Roosevelt has become the symbol of the new approach by which it is to be saved: it must be modernized; loyalty of the masses must be secured; it must expand.

"How does Roosevelt understand his own general problem? It would seem to be something as follows: American capitalism is the most vigorous and powerful section of international capitalism. It does not yet need to turn toward fascism for preservation. It can continue, and thereby uphold and even extend the strength and privileges of the American bourgeoisie, for a considerable future period. But it can do so only if three conditions, themselves integrally related, are fulfilled.

"First, it must 'modernize'. It must abandon the remnants and the attitudes of laissez-faire. It must draw the lessons from the older capitalism of Europe, including the lessons from reformist politics and from the totalitarian states. It must try to reduce the excessive anarchy of industry on the one side; and in the relations between capital and labor on the other -- recognizing that a working class organized and closely related to the governmental structure can, if properly managed, be less dangerous in the present period than a disorganized and chaotic working class. The parts must accept 'controls' for the sake of the well-being of the whole. Above all, it must recognize that modern capitalism can work only with the extension of the function of the state into wider and wider spheres.

"Second . . . the loyalty of the masses toward the capitalist order must be kept. . . . The United States requires a New Deal in ideology. . . . The object of the ideology is to convince the masses that the government -- at least while Roosevelt is at its head -- is their government; that their enemies are neither capitalism nor its state, but merely, 'the sixty families'. This ideology must be backed up with a necessary minimum of actual or apparent concession, a running expense which American capitalism cannot at present afford to eliminate.

"The third and most vital condition for the continuance of American capitalism is the extension of its capital market. The most vigorous and powerful section of international capitalism must take its place openly and aggressively as the dominant power in the world. . . ."²

The Trotskyists have denied that Roosevelt is a fascist and has consciously intended to introduce fascism. However, they have held that if the United States is threatened by revolutionary working class action resulting

¹Burnham, "Roosevelt Faces the Future," New International (Feb., 1938), Vol. IV, No. 2, pp. 43-45.

²Burnham, op. cit., p. 44.

from capitalism's inability to solve its economic dilemmas and contradictions, the policies of his administration would provide a ready transition to fascism.

" . . . In actuality, Roosevelt is the ablest and most far-sighted politician yet produced by the American capitalist class. His sole objective, linking into a single chain all his seemingly contradictory acts, is to save and stabilize the system of American capitalism."³

" . . . Of course, Roosevelt was not and is not a fascist Wherever possible, Roosevelt uses the methods of class collaboration, not of direct class tyranny.

"Nevertheless, during the decline of capitalism, the capitalist attempt to solve a deep crisis tends necessarily along fascist lines. . . . Because of this tendency in the decline of capitalism, the Roosevelt program and methods were a kind of pale foreshadowing of Fascism, a faint metaphor of what is to come."⁴

"But the most significant general aspect of the whole program is the rapid stride forward it makes in the consolidation of bourgeois rule which, under Roosevelt, is preparing the United States for the comparatively smooth transition to Fascism. . . ."⁵

In its fundamental aspects, the criticism made of the New Deal by the Trotskyists falls into three broad categories: (1) its economic proposals cannot solve the basic contradictions of capitalism: unemployment, social security; (2) its foreign policies comprise a program of American imperialism in Latin America and the Far East; (3) its armament program and mobilization plans all point to preparation for American participation in an impending war.

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Economic Inadequacies of the New Deal. The S.W.P.'s condemnation of

³Preis, op. cit., p. 11.

⁴West, "Will Roosevelt Be Re-elected?" New International (April, 1936), Vol. III, No. 2, p. 34.

⁵West, "The Roosevelt 'Security' Program," New International (March, 1935), Vol. II, No. 2, p. 42.

⁶Weber, "New Trends Under the New Deal," New International (July, 1934), Vol. I, No. 1, pp. 16-17. West, "The Roosevelt 'Security' Program," New International (March, 1935), Vol. II, No. 2, pp. 40-43. Burnham, "Roosevelt Faces the Future," New International (Feb., 1938), Vol. IV, No. 2, pp. 43-45. Spector, "The Collapse of the New Deal," New International (June, 1938), Vol. IV, No. 6, pp. 173-175. Preis, op. cit., pp. 5-13.

the New Deal has been based upon its allegations that: (1) genuine planning under capitalism is impossible because the motive of private profit has taken precedence over the economic needs of the country. (2) The New Deal has not been able to make good its objective of providing temporary relief until private industry reabsorbs the unemployed; the relief provided has been inadequate, and unemployment has not been substantially reduced. (3) Whatever "recovery" has been accomplished under the New Deal has been recovery for Big Business at the expense of workers' wages, hours of work and employment. In short, the S.W.P. has declared, economic recovery predicated upon the premises of the New Deal is impossible in theory and unworkable in practice.

Roosevelt's Imperialism in Latin America and the Far East.⁷ It has been the contention of the S.W.P. that imperialist expansion in Latin America is an indispensable part of Roosevelt's plans for saving American capitalism. American capitalism must expand or perish, it has been alleged, and Roosevelt's foreign policies are predicated upon the expansion of American business. Consequently, while Roosevelt has attempted to placate the workers by insignificant concessions at home, he has quietly embarked upon "Yankee Imperialism" abroad. The Pan-American conference held at Lima, Peru, has been interpreted as an effort on the part of the United States to stop the inroads made upon American trade by Germany and Japan.⁸

"Lima is the stage on which the American imperialists have played the first act of their worldwide counter-offensive against Germany and Japan. The United States delegation sought to consolidate Yankee hegemony in Latin-America, to eradicate all European influence, to expel Germany and her allies from Latin-America's markets and, in short, to destroy all positions hitherto conquered by rival imperialisms. As the United States comes to

⁷Socialist Workers Party, op. cit., pp. 24-25. Draper, Are You Ready for War? pp. 13-14. "The Good Neighbor," New International (April, 1938), Vol. IV, No. 4, p. 112. Socialist Appeal, Dec. 10, 1938, pp. 1,4; Dec. 17, 1938, p. 1; Jan. 7, 1939, pp. 1,3.

⁸Socialist Appeal, Jan. 7, 1939, pp. 1,3.

the front of the stage, the world conflict assumes a new form. Now it is not simply the old conflict between the starved imperialisms, impelled to the offensive by their desperate condition, against the satiated imperialisms who benefitted from Versailles and are constantly on the defensive, having as their only aim the preservation of their booty. Now a new partition of the world is being pressed most determinedly by the United States.

"Elsewhere, Wall Street still develops its counter-offensive under purely economic forms (war against controlled commerce, restoration of complete liberty of commerce, lowering of tariffs, loan, etc.) In the Western Hemisphere, however, that counter-offensive assumes definite political forms, ranging from collective declarations against aggressors and proposals for defensive alliances to ever more precise plans for military strategy.

"American imperialism aims at more than monopolizing the markets and the sources of raw materials of the entire Western Hemisphere. It also aims at making the Americas, from Cape Horn to Patagonia, the physical, economic and strategic base required for the coming decisive struggles for the possession of the world. This is why Roosevelt bellicosely proclaims, alongside of the evangelical preaching of Hull, that the United States will defend, tooth and nail, all the countries in the hemisphere. The 'good neighbor', Wall Street, in reality aims to transform its neighbors into American-controlled Manchukuo and Czechoslovakias."⁹

Roosevelt Prepares for War.¹⁰ On the basis of its analysis, the S.W.P. has concluded that the Roosevelt regime must be prepared to defend its imperialistic policies by war. It has further maintained that the practical conduct of the New Deal administration has confirmed its contentions: (1) Roosevelt has demanded of Congress huge appropriations -- the largest in the history of the United States -- for the army, navy and air forces.¹¹ (2) Roosevelt has not expressed any opposition to the plans of the War Department and other "war-mongers" (as embodied in the Sheppard-Hill bill) for a thorough and complete mobilization which would be tantamount to the establishment of fascism in the United States.¹² (3) The Roosevelt Administration has opposed

⁹ Socialist Appeal, Jan. 7, 1939, p. 1.

¹⁰ Preis, op. cit., pp. 11-13. Draper, "The Making of a War Monger," New International (Sept., 1938), Vol. IV, No. 9, pp. 268-271. Socialist Appeal, Feb. 19, 1938, p. 1; Oct. 10, 1938, pp. 1,2. Jan. 21, 1939, p. 1.

¹¹ Socialist Appeal, Dec. 24, 1938, p. 1; Jan. 7, 1939, p. 1.

¹² Michaels and Gates, "The War Mobilization Plan," New International (Nov., 1938), Vol. IV, No. 11, pp. 337-340.

the Ludlow Amendment providing for a war referendum in all cases save
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actual invasion by an enemy.

"The United States, along with every other nation, heads directly toward the war. In these recent months, Roosevelt, the cunning leader of American imperialism, is moving rapidly toward first place among the war-makers of the world.

"In his October address at Chicago, Roosevelt announced his direction: Toward the war! First place in his Annual Message to Congress was given to the war. At the bidding of his masters, the rulers of American industry and banking, he inserted into his budget more than a billion dollars for military appropriations.

"To the Ludlow Amendment, Roosevelt and his associates replied that the people have no right whatever to speak on such a question as war, that they will go to war when, how, and against whom the imperialists dictate, that no measure will be permitted which might have even the slightest chance for interference with the plans of the war-makers."¹⁴

"Fight Imperialist War!"¹⁵ The Socialist Workers party has made the fight against the policies of Roosevelt one of the significant aspects of its program of immediate demands. It has engaged in a widespread campaign to expose the imperialist designs of his administration.

The following slogans, raised by the S.W.P. indicate the nature of the campaign waged against the Roosevelt Administration:

"DOWN WITH THE WAR-MONGERS!
ENLIST NOW IN THE FIGHT AGAINST THE WAR!
AGAINST THE ROOSEVELT WAR PLANS!
ALL WAR FUNDS TO THE UNEMPLOYED!
WITHDRAW ALL U.S. ARMED FORCES FROM THE FAR EAST!
AGAINST THE SHEPPARD-HILL BILL!
AGAINST COLLECTIVE SECURITY, THE MASK OF IMPERIALISM!
END WAR BY THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION!
BUILD THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY, THE ONE ANSWER TO THE WAR-MAKERS!
WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE!
FOR THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL AND THE TRIUMPH OF THE WORLD REVOLUTION!"¹⁶

"BREAD! NOT BATTLESHIPS!"¹⁷

1936 Election Campaign.¹⁸ In preparing for its 1936 election program, the Trotskyists restated their position: that Roosevelt was not a fascist,

¹³ Socialist Appeal, Oct. 5, 1938, p. 2; March 14, 1939, p. 1.

¹⁴ Socialist Appeal, Feb. 19, 1938, p. 1.

¹⁵ Socialist Appeal, Dec. 24, 1938, p. 1; Jan. 7, 1939, p. 3; Jan. 21, 1939, p. 1.

¹⁶ Socialist Appeal, Feb. 19, 1938, p. 1.

¹⁷ Socialist Appeal, Dec. 24, 1938, p. 1.

¹⁸ West, "Will Roosevelt Be Re-Elected?" New International (April, 1936), Vol. III, No. 2, pp. 33-36.

although the inability of the New Deal to solve its dilemmas might force him in that direction.¹⁹ That the issue was still socialism versus capitalism, and not democracy versus fascism, as it was presented by the Communist party.²⁰

"And this election year is a splendid year for a mighty educational campaign: not against the Liberty League or Wall Street or the Supreme Court or Roosevelt, but against the capitalist state; and not for a reformist party to take governmental office as a handmaiden of capitalism, but for a party to overthrow the state. It is a splendid year, that is to say, for a campaign for the revolutionary party, for utilizing the ferment of the election year and the war crisis and the labor struggles for the forging of the revolutionary leadership of the American working class."²¹

Party Organization¹

Formal Organization. In its formal aspects, the organization of the Socialist Workers party does not differ greatly from that of the Communist party, for example. The highest authority of the party is the National Convention, held yearly, to which democratically elected delegates are sent. Between Conventions, a National Committee elected by the Convention exercises plenary powers. Membership is open to all persons accepting the party's Declaration of Principles and Constitution and agreeing to accept its discipline and be active in its work. The basic unit of the party is the territorial or occupational branch, limited in its membership to from 5 to 50 persons.²

Democratic Centralism.³ The S.W.P. has maintained that Lenin's prin-

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 34.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 36.

²¹ Idem.

¹ Socialist Workers Party, op. cit., pp. 29-31.

² Idem.

³ "On the Nature of the Party, Socialist Appeal, Feb. 26, 1938, p. 2.

ciple of democratic centralism is strictly adhered to. All party decisions, it has been alleged, are democratically arrived at after active discussion on the part of the membership. All decisions must be promptly carried out by the National Committee, democratically elected and under the constant surveillance of the membership. When decisions have been reached after extensive inner-party discussion, the results are binding on the entire membership; persons contravening the party line are subject to disciplinary action -- expulsion in extreme cases. A disputed question once closed by a party decision may not be opened unless so authorized by the party.⁴ The S.W.P. does not regard itself as an "all-inclusive" party, and has condemned that type of organization.⁵

Education and Propaganda. The S.W.P. has attempted to complement its revolutionary class struggle policies in mass organizations and among workers generally by formal education and propaganda. It publishes books and pamphlets in its own name and under that of the Pioneer Publishers,^{an} independent but sympathetic organization. Its official publications are the Socialist Appeal, a newspaper appearing twice weekly, and the New International, a "monthly organ of revolutionary Marxism".

The S.W.P. also conducts numerous Marxist schools in the elementary principles of Marxism, trade unionism, American history, public speaking, etc.

Young People's Socialist League (Fourth Internationalists).⁶ The Trotskyist youth movement prior to its admission in 1936 into the Young People's Socialist League of the Socialist party, was known as the Young Spartacus League. After the Trotskyists withdrew from the S.P. in 1937, the youth section also severed its ties with the Socialist party but retained

⁴Idem.

⁵Idem.

⁶Socialist Workers Party, op. cit., p. 30.

the designation of Young People's Socialist League, adding "Fourth Internationalists" to the name.

The members of the Y.P.S.L. (Fourth Internationalists) are autonomously organized, but are guided in their " . . . activities by the Declaration of Principles of the Party, party policies and decisions".⁷ The YPSL has attempted to organize the youth along militant class struggle lines laid down by the SWP.

The official monthly newspaper of the Y.P.S.L. is the Challenge of Youth.

⁷Socialist Workers Party, op. cit., p. 30.

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST LEAGUE (TROTSKYISTS) -- CRITICISM
OF THIRD COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL (1928-1935)

Criticism of Communist International --1928-1935¹

Third Period Communism. The fundamental differences separating the followers of Trotsky from Stalin have already been given in previous chapters. The adoption by the Communist International of Stalin's theory of Socialism In One Country as contrasted with Lenin and Trotsky's theory of Permanent Revolution, according to the allegation of Trotsky's followers, led to serious theoretical defects in the position taken by the Communist International on many issues (especially after 1935). From 1928 to 1935, however, the criticism made by the Trotskyists of the Communist International flowed directly from the orientation first suggested at the Fifth World Congress of the Comintern (1924)² but formally adopted at the Sixth World Congress (1928). This basic orientation (later known as Third Period Communism) was that the doomsday of capitalism was at hand: "'The working class is becoming more and more radicalized, the situation is becoming more and more revolutionary.'"³ Workers everywhere were militant and up in arms, ready to strike the final blow, the Comintern believed.

There was one serious obstacle, however, according to the Sixth Congress: by its policies the Social Democracy was impeding this "stormy revolutionary upsurge" and the "mass radicalization of the workers". In order to

¹For a more extended treatment see Trotsky, The Third International After Lenin, pp. 75-166. James, World Revolution, 1917-1936, pp. 305-357.

²Trotsky, op. cit., p. 259.

³Idem.

defeat the Social Democracy and keep the workers on the correct path, it was the duty of the Communist International to drive a wedge between the reformist leadership and the workers, to expose the former and provide the necessary political and organizational channels for the latter. From this approach the Comintern worked out the theory of Social Fascism, from which stemmed dual (red) unionism and united-front-from-below tactics. The Trotskyists rejected the new approach and its resultant strategy.

The Theory of Social Fascism

The theory of social fascism was first set forth by Stalin in 1924, according to the Trotskyists, in the following statement (International Press Correspondence, Oct. 9, 1924):

"'Firstly it is not true that Fascism is only a fighting organisation of the bourgeoisie. Fascism is not merely a military-technical matter. Fascism is a fighting organisation of the bourgeoisie dependent upon the active support of Social Democracy. Objectively Social Democracy is the moderate wing of Fascism. There is no ground for supposing that a fighting organisation of the bourgeoisie can reach decisive results in its struggle, or in a government of a country, without the active support of Social Democracy. There is just as little ground for supposing that Social Democracy can achieve decisive results in the struggles or in the government of a country without active support by the fighting organisation of the bourgeoisie. These organisations do not exclude but complement one another. They are not poles apart, but immediate neighbours. They are not antipodes but twins. Fascism is the unformed political block of these two basic organisations, which arose under the critical after-war conditions of imperialism, and is intended for the struggle against the proletarian revolution."⁴

And again, Stalin was quoted thus:

"'Fascism is the military organization of the bourgeoisie which leans

⁴James, op. cit., p. 310.

upon the social democracy for active support. The social democracy, objectively speaking, is the moderate wing of fascism."⁵

Without holding any brief for social democracy, Trotsky and his followers declared that this analysis was untenable. Although it might have been true, as Stalin said, that social democracy had indirectly aided the fascist cause, it did not mean that the social democrats were fascists or actually had anything in common with the fascists.

"The social democracy has prepared all the conditions necessary for the triumph of Fascism. But by this fact it has also prepared the stage for its own political liquidation. It is absolutely correct to place on the social democrats the responsibility for the emergency legislation of Brüning as well as for the impending danger of Fascist savagery. It is absolute balderdash to identify social democracy with Fascism."⁶

" . . . There is no debating that the bourgeoisie leans on the social democracy, and that Fascism is a military organization of the bourgeoisie; and this has been remarked upon a long time ago. The only conclusion which follows from this is that the social democracy as well as Fascism are the tools of the big bourgeoisie. How the social democracy becomes thereby also a 'wing' of Fascism is incomprehensible. Equally profound is another observation by the same author: Fascism and social democracy are not enemies, they are twins. Now twins may be the bitterest enemies: while on the other hand allies need not be born necessarily on one and the same day and from identical parents. Stalin's constructions lack even formal logic, to say nothing of dialectics. Their strength lies in the fact that none dares challenge them."⁷

Trotsky also sharply disputed the contention of the Comintern that no contradiction exists between fascism and social democracy; they are different, he maintained, in their political orientation and the source of their support. Fascism is anti-parliamentarian in its outlook; the social democracy is parliamentary; the former is supported chiefly by the petty bourgeoisie, while the latter derives its strength from the working classes. These differences are greatly significant, he held.⁸

⁵Stalin, quoted in Trotsky, What Next? p. 33.

⁶Ibid., p. 13.

⁷Ibid., pp. 33-34.

⁸Ibid., pp. 28-29.

Trotsky also raised some fundamental questions regarding the validity of the Comintern's reasoning. If social democracy and fascism were "twins", he asked, why was the term "social" inserted before "fascism"?

" . . . For if there be no contradiction whatsoever between democracy and Fascism, -- even in the sphere of the form of the rule of the bourgeoisie, -- then these two regimes obviously enough must be equivalent. Whence the conclusion: social democracy = Fascism. For some reason, however, social democracy is dubbed social Fascism. And the meaning of the term 'social' in this connection has been left unexplained to this very moment."⁹

Trotsky further maintained that the entire conception of social fascism was advanced to bolster up a faulty analysis based upon the imminency of revolutionary upsurges among the masses. Instead, he offered what he regarded as the correct analysis of the relationship existing between social democracy and fascism: the bourgeoisie turn to the former to stem the tide of rising revolution, and, failing, to the latter to defeat an impending revolution.

" . . . the bourgeoisie advances its Fascist shoulder only at the moment an immediate revolutionary danger threatens the foundations of the regime itself and when the normal organs of the bourgeois state prove themselves insufficient. In this sense active Fascism signifies the condition of civil war on the part of capitalist society facing the rebelling proletariat. Contrariwise, the bourgeoisie is forced to advance its Left, social democratic, shoulder in a period that precedes the time of the civil war, so as to deceive the proletariat, to pacify and disintegrate it, or in a period following upon a serious and lasting victory over the proletariat. That is, when it is forced to lay hold of the broad masses of the people parliamentarily, among them also the workers disappointed by the revolution, in order to re-establish the normal regime. . . ."¹⁰

Trotsky has intimated that a better characterization than "more moderate wing of Fascism" for the social democracy is "left wing of bourgeois society"; but again he urged that the term should be used with qualifications, for the Social Democrats do represent large sections of the work-

⁹Ibid., p. 28.

¹⁰Trotsky, Strategy of the World Revolution, pp. 35-36; The Third International After Lenin, pp. 112-113.

ing class, whether or not they are acting in the latter's interests.

"It might well be said that the social democracy is the Left wing of bourgeois society. This declaration is quite correct if one does not construe it quite so simply and thereby forgets that the social democracy still leads millions of workers behind it, and within definite limits is forced to reckon not only with the will of its bourgeois master but also with the interests of its deluded proletarian mandatories. . . ."¹¹

A concrete example, according to Trotsky, of how disastrous and fatal were the consequences of social fascism was afforded by the triumph of Hitler in Germany. Instead of recognizing that the social democracy was primarily a workers' party, regardless of how incorrect its policies were, and forming a united front with it, the line of the Communist Party in Germany was that the greatest enemy of the proletariat was the social democracy which would have to be defeated even before Hitler.¹²

Trotsky's characterization of the ideology of the Communist Party of Germany as motivated by the theory of social fascism ran in the following vein.

"But just now, when this [bourgeois] regime is tottering in Germany, Fascism steps forward in its support. To lay this supporter by the heels, we are told, it is first necessary to finish off the social democracy. . . .

" . . . And what if the real development of the class struggle, at this very moment, has posed the question of Fascism before the working class, as a life and death question? Then the working class must be wheeled about with its back to the question; it must be lulled; it must be convinced that the task of fighting against Fascism is a minor task; that it will wait and solve itself; that Fascism in reality rules already; that Hitler will add nothing new; that there is no cause to fear Hitler; that Hitler will only clear the road for the Communists."¹³

In September 1932, before Hitler came to power in Germany, Trotsky warned of the imminence of this event and urged the Comintern to change its line of strategy. In an attack on the policies of Stalin, he declared:

" . . . The Stalinist bureaucracy bears the direct and immediate re-

¹¹Trotsky, The Strategy of the World Revolution, pp. 36-37; The Third International After Lenin, p. 114.

¹²Trotsky, What Next? pp. 58-60.

¹³Ibid., p. 59.

sponsibility for the growth of Fascism before the proletarian vanguard."¹⁴

" . . . The policy of the united front toward the Social Democracy must be prepared in the very near future to render possible, on the basis of proletarian democratic representation, the creation of class organs of struggle, i.e., of workers' soviets."¹⁵

" . . . The theory of 'social Fascism', which has completely and finally been bankrupted, must at last be thrown out as worthless junk."¹⁶

Dual Unionism. Trotskyists recognized that the doctrine of dual unionism was a logical outcome of social fascism. If the proletariat was ready for militant economic as well as political action, argued the Comintern, it would be necessary to provide new channels to serve as outlets for its revolutionary ardor. As a consequence, the Comintern urged all Communists to leave the established trade unions and set up rival, dual unions which would effectively expose the charlatan character of the established unions and form the nucleus for a mighty revolutionary union, to which all class-conscious workers would swarm in droves.

Since the Trotskyists rejected the theoretical basis of social fascism, they also repudiated this corollary drawn directly from it. They did not believe that the masses were everywhere in rebellion against the conservative leadership of the existing unions. They argued that splitting unions would have the very opposite effect from that intended. Since the mass of workers were not perceptibly more radical than their leadership, if Communists withdrew from these unions they would not only weaken them ideologically but would remove the only contact by which organized workers could be made revolutionary-minded. Such strategy, moreover, would play right into the hands of the very leadership the Communist party was opposing; the dual unions would

¹⁴Trotsky, The Only Road, p. 28.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 93.

¹⁶Idem.

isolate the Communists and keep the workers directly under the thumb of the opportunistic trade-union leadership. Trotsky therefore urged the Communist party to abandon dual unionism and work within the existing unions to make them more revolutionary in their outlook.

"Die Rote Fahne complains that many Communists consider meaningless the participation in reformist unions. 'Why should we revive the old push-cart?', they declare. And as a matter of fact, why? If one intends seriously to fight for the control of the old unions, one should appeal to the unorganized that they enter them; it is precisely the new strata that can supply out the backing for the Left wing. But in that case one cannot build parallel unions, i.e., create a competitive agency to enroll the workers."¹⁷

"And all the while, it is precisely within the trade unions that an exceptionally fruitful field is now open for action. While the social democratic party still has the wherewithal to fool the workers by political hullabaloo, the trade unions are confronted by the impasse of capitalism as by a hopeless prison wall. The 200,000-300,000 workers who are now organized in independent Red unions, could serve as a priceless leaven within the reformist brotherhoods."¹⁸

The United-Front-From-Below. During the Third Period, on questions of relations to other workers' organizations, the tactic of the Comintern was the united-front-from-below. The Trotskyists held that, like dual unionism, it followed as a natural consequence of the theory of social fascism. Since the leaders of the socialist party and other proletarian parties were regarded as social-fascists, the Communist party could not enter into any agreements, however specific and for whatever limited purposes, with their leaders; instead, it attempted to expose them. This tactic was known as the united-front-from-below because the appeal for united action was made directly to the rank-and-file of an organization over the heads of the leadership.

It was Trotsky's thesis that the united-front-from-below, like dual unionism and social fascism, contributed to the downfall of the German

¹⁷Trotsky, What Next? pp. 152-153.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 153.

working class and the rise of Hitlerism. Workers who were members of non-communist political and economic organizations, especially the numerically powerful German Social Democratic party, belonged to their respective organizations because they had faith and confidence -- even if undeservedly and mistakenly so -- in their leadership. Under the circumstances, they would not, and did not, Trotsky maintained, respond to a call which branded their leaders as fascists and betrayers. The result, therefore, was disunity and disharmony on many fundamental issues where a common proletarian front could have broken the back of fascism in Germany.

"Since the 'Third Period' it was held to be inviolable that there could be no talk about agreements with the social democracy. It was not only inadmissible to assume the initiative in the united front, as the Third and Fourth World Congresses taught -- but even proposals for common actions emanating from the social democracy had to be rejected. The reformist leaders are 'sufficiently exposed'. The experience of the past is sufficient. Instead of pursuing politics, the masses must be told history. To turn to the reformists with proposals means to acknowledge them capable of fighting. That alone would be Social Fascism, etc. Thus intoned the ear-deafening melody of the ultra-Leftist barrel-organ in the last three-four years. . . ."¹⁹

Trotsky maintained that a genuine united front agreement between the leadership of the Communists and the Social Democrats was the key to the solution. Only if the S.D. leadership was unwilling to enter into such negotiations or agreements should the Communist party have appealed directly to the S.D. membership to compel a united front.

"Without so much as hiding or mitigating our opinion of the social democratic leaders, we may and we must say to the social democratic workers, 'Since, on the one hand, you are willing to fight together with us; and since, on the other, you are still unwilling to break with your leaders, here is what we suggest: Force your leaders to join us in a common struggle for such and such practical aims, in such and such a manner; as for us, we, Communists, are ready.' Can anything be more plain, more palpable, more convincing?"²⁰

¹⁹ Trotsky, The Only Road, p. 49.

²⁰ Trotsky, What Next? p. 54.

Lack of Democratic Centralism. Trotsky's basic criticism of the organization of the Comintern was that it was entirely dominated by the bureaucracy of the Communist Party of Soviet Russia which, in turn, was completely dominated by Stalin. Trotskyists declared that Stalin used most questionable means and methods to retain his iron control over the Comintern: periodic purges and expulsions; frame-ups; personal selection of the delegates from the various sections of the Comintern throughout the world, with frequent change of leadership whenever his wishes were not obeyed or his will defied. Further, the Comintern was called together infrequently (some seven years elapsed between the Sixth and Seventh Congresses of the Comintern); its meetings were not democratically conducted; its conclusions undemocratically arrived at. Instead of gathering to formulate policies in a democratic manner, the Congress acted as a rubber stamp for Stalin, invariably giving its 100% endorsement to the policies he had already decided upon in advance of the Congress.²¹

" . . . Beginning with the autumn of 1923, the history of the Communist International is a history of the complete renovation of its Moscow staff, and the staffs of all the national sections, by way of a series of palace revolutions, purgations from above, expulsions, etc. At the present time, the Communist International is a completely submissive apparatus in the service of Soviet foreign policy, ready at any time for any zigzag whatever."²²

"The regime imposed upon the official Communist movement throughout the world by a series of events, absolutely without precedent in history, formally prohibits such an examination in the domain over which it holds sway. And for good reason, because such a test is not only the principal prerequisite for the overthrow of the regime but a guarantee that this overthrow would follow. This explains why it greets its ideological adversaries in the ranks of Communism with such rabid fury, with abuse and falsehood, and even with physical violence and persecution. It regards the mildest questioning with nervous suspicion, and the idea of a grouping within the movement -- however temporary -- that defends a conception different from that which prevails, it denounces as heresy and treason, despite the fact that such groupings have not only been common in the movement but have frequently been necessary and have contributed to its progress."²³

²¹Trotsky, Third International After Lenin, pp. 236-244.

²²Trotsky, The Revolution Betrayed, pp. 186-187.

²³Trotsky, The Strategy of the World Revolution, Introduction by Max Schachtman, pp. vi-vii.

" . . . In the barracks, the soldier does not select his officers; he does not help to formulate the strategy and tactics of the army; he fights for a class other than his own; his function is bounded on all sides by the word Obey! In the revolutionary army, that is, in the Communist party, all this is reversed. More accurately, all this was reversed up to the time the movement became corroded by what has been properly called Stalinism."²⁴

Trotsky accused the Comintern, under Stalin's domination, of eliminating democratic centralism and substituting for it another conception of organization and management on the pretext of extreme political necessity.

" . . . We have known quite well that the party regime must rest upon the foundation of democratic centralism. Therewith it was assumed that in theory and also carried out in practice that democratic centralism included a full possibility of discussion, the right of criticism and the expression of disagreement, the right of election and removal just as it involved at the same time an iron discipline during actions under the leadership of the elective and removable directing organs. If, by democracy, was understood the subordination of the individual party organs to the party, then centralism meant a correctly erected, conscious discipline that guaranteed the fighting ability of the party. Now, however, to this formula, which has stood the test in the whole past, an entirely new criterion has been added, that of 'the strictest revolutionary organization'. It therefore appears that simple democratic centralism no longer suffices for the party and that it now requires a revolutionary organization of democratic centralism. This formula quite simply puts the new autocratic idea of 'revolutionary organization' above democratic centralism and thereby also above the party.

"What is the main feature of the idea of revolutionary organization, and a 'very strict' one at that, which even stands above the idea of democratic centralism? Its main feature is a party apparatus which, completely independent of the party or aspiring to such an independence, is supposed to preserve 'order' through its autocratic bureaucracy without the party masses, and when 'order' requires it, to be able to suspend or break through the will of the party, by violating statutes, postponing party conventions or making the latter a mere fiction.

"The apparatus has hankered for a long time for such a formula as 'revolutionary organization' that was to set it above democracy and centralism. . . ."²⁵

American Trotskyists especially inveighed against the alleged high-handedness of Stalin in undemocratically mismanaging the American Communist movement. They charged that within the short space of less than five years, the leadership was twice replaced without consulting the wishes of the rank-

²⁴Idem.

²⁵Ibid., pp. 67-68.

and-file members of the American section of the Comintern.

" . . . In 1925, the desires and votes of two-thirds of the American Communist Party membership were swept aside by a cablegram from the Executive Committee of the Communist International which appointed the group representing the remaining third of the party to lead it. That is the origin of four years of opportunist leadership of the Lovestone-Pepper faction in this country. In 1929, matters had progressed to the point where a similar decision from the international center of the bureaucracy, the Stalinist machine, wiped out the desires and votes of nine-tenths of the party membership and appointed the Foster group, representing the remaining tenth, to direct the party's destinies."²⁶

The same situation of irresponsible absentee control was alleged to have existed in Germany,²⁷ and elsewhere.

Criticism of Communist Party, U.S.A. -- 1928-1935

During this period, the major criticism of the Trotskyists in the United States was not directed against the C.P., U.S.A., but rather at the principles set forth by the Communist International which the Communist party attempted to carry out in the United States. One situation in this country, however, gave rise to a special C.P. analysis which the Trotskyists completely rejected: the Negro question.

The Negro Question¹ Many shortcomings in the C.P. thesis of "Self-Determination in the Black Belt" were noted by the Trotskyists. (1) The impossibility of marking out a contiguous area where the Negroes comprise a Black Belt. (2) The increasing urbanization of the Negro and his transformation from a farmer to a member of the working class. (3) The northward movement of the Negro population. (4) The hostility created between Southern Whites and Negroes by this thesis, which would place many of the former in a position of subservience to the latter.

²⁶Ibid., pp. vii-viii.

²⁷Trotsky, The Only Road, p. 45.

¹Wright, "Shifts in the Negro Question," New International (Nov., 1934), Vol. I, No. 4, pp. 113-115.

The Trotskyists therefore concluded that the correct solution of the problem consisted in stressing solidarity between Negro and white workers.

"From the revolutionary standpoint the Negro problem is primarily the problem of gaining over to the revolutionary platform the overwhelming majority of the Negro workers. The rural Negro can be gained as an ally only in the same manner, basically, as the rural white, and that is by being mobilized under the leadership of the proletariat."²

" . . . The Negroes have been taught by the bourgeoisie to distrust and hate the white workers and vice versa. We must imbue the Negro with class solidarity. We must say, 'The wisest of the Negro race understand that the agitation of the question of class solidarity is the only way out for his race! Class conscious Negro and white workers must teach the Negro masses and the white that they have only one enemy -- their real lynchers and oppressors -- the capitalists.'³

²Ibid., p. 114.

³Ibid., p. 115.

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST LEAGUE--FOURTH INTERNATIONAL -- CRITICISM OF THIRD INTERNATIONAL (SINCE 1935)

The People's Front Orientation¹

The Trotskyists have held that at the Seventh Congress of the Communist International (1935), the strategy and tactics which characterized the Third Period Communism (social fascism, dual unionism, united-front-from-below) unofficially came to an end by the adoption of the People's Front strategy. Even as the International Communist League regarded the strategy of the Third Period as ill-advised ultra-leftism, so it has regarded the new People's Front orientation as opportunist ultra-rightism which has definitely broken with the principles of Marxism-Leninism. It has drawn up what it regards as a most sweeping indictment of the People's Front.

Trotskyists have expressed their amazement at the alleged facility with which the Comintern was able to disorientate itself from social fascism and adopt a totally new approach, almost overnight, without any party preparation or discussion.

" . . . The ease with which the Communist Party -- without the least internal discussion -- went over from the theory and practice of 'social fascism' to a bloc with the Radical Socialists and the repudiation of revolutionary tasks for the sake of 'immediate demands' demonstrates that the apparatus of the party is completely shot through with cynicism, and its membership disoriented and unaccustomed to thinking. It is a diseased party."²

¹For a general survey, see James, World Revolution, 1917-1936, pp. 373-404. Trotsky, "On the Seventh Congress of the Comintern," New International (Oct., 1935), Vol. II, No. 6, pp. 177-179. New Militant, Jan. 11, 1936, p. 3.

²Trotsky, Whither France? p. 107.

The Trotskyists have not accepted the official explanation ("Objective conditions have changed.") for the sudden switch of basic policies. (Trotsky has already indicated the alleged weakness of the Comintern in hiding behind the screen of "objective conditions" in explaining the failure of the German Communist Party in 1923.³) They have rather attributed the change to such subjective factors as incompetent party leadership and the compulsions wrought by Stalin's theory of socialism in one country. They have presented a number of basic objections to the People's Front, which they have viewed with even greater alarm than the strategy of Third Period Communism. They have held: (1) it is anti-Marxian, class collaboration, and an abandonment of the class struggle; (2) it will not prevent war or fascism; (3) it has misleadingly posed the question of democracy versus fascism; (4) it will not win the support of the middle class; (5) it will not aid the Soviet Union but will lead the proletariat into a world war to defend capitalism and imperialism; (6) it has failed the workers in France, Spain, the United States and elsewhere.

The People's Front a Result of "Socialism in One Country".⁴ The Trotskyists have alleged that the People's Front has resulted from Stalin's policy of socialism in one country; the shift of emphasis from the extension of the frontiers of the October Revolution to the defense of the Soviet Union only, has resulted in grave and significant changes in the policies of the Comintern. In order to build socialism in the Soviet Union, it has been necessary to maintain, politically, the status quo in Europe and the Far East. To do this Russia sought to find allies against its most potential enemies, Germany and Japan. It therefore concluded collective security pacts

³Trotsky, The Strategy of the World Revolution, p. 25; Third International After Lenin, p. 101.

⁴Trotsky, The Revolution Betrayed, pp. 186-244. Burnham, The People's Front, pp. 62-63.

with the "democratic" countries like Great Britain and France. In order to assure the effectiveness of these pacts, the Trotskyists declared, the Communist parties throughout the world were asked to suspend all class-struggle policies which would antagonize the allies of the Soviet Union. Hence they adopted a People's Front approach to unite all the anti-fascist forces under one banner for the support of collective security pacts. In consequence, Trotskyists charged, the Communist International has become subservient in its activities to the foreign policy of the Soviet Union. But had the latter thought of the interests of the world proletariat it would never have adopted its new approach.

" . . . The People's Front gives up the class struggle in favor of class collaboration; it renounces the struggle for socialism in favor of the defense of democracy (a position altogether acceptable to the capitalist democracies of Great Britain, France, and the United States); it prepares the ground for the transition from a People's Front to a 'national front', to full national unity, as has already been brought completely into the open in France, and been made ready in Great Britain and the United States."⁵

People's Front Is Class Collaboration. The Trotskyists have contended that the People's Front, like old wine in new bottles, is but another name for the discredited doctrine of class collaboration pursued by the Second International.⁶ In order to win the support not merely of proletarian elements but middle-class groups as well, the People's Front has presented a common program which is not a workers' program, the charge has been made. To the extent that Socialists and Communists have entered the ministries of capitalist governments, to help carry out such a program, they have abandoned the class struggle and in effect have repeated all the errors arising from the policies of the Social Democracies.⁷

⁵Burnham, op. cit., p. 63.

⁶Goldman, What Is Socialism? pp. 39-40. Socialist Workers Party, Declaration of Principles and Constitution, pp. 13-14. New Militant, Aug. 24, 1935, p. 4.

⁷Burnham, op. cit., pp. 11-16. Trotsky, Whither France? p. 129.

" . . . The Peoples' Front is merely a re-wording of the theories and practices of class collaboration and coalition government, as these have been advocated by reformists since the beginning of the modern labor movement. Class collaboration is what the Peoples' Front specifically proposes: the union of organizations and parties representing various classes and sections of classes on the basis of a common program to defend bourgeois democracy. . . ."⁸

"For the proletariat, through its parties, to give up its own independent program means to give up its independent functioning as a class. And this is precisely the meaning of the Peoples' Front. In the Peoples' Front, the proletariat renounces its class independence, gives up its class aims -- the only aims, as Marxism teaches, which can serve its interests. By accepting the program of the Peoples' Front, it thereby accepts the aims of another section of society; it accepts the aim of the defense of capitalism when all history demonstrates that the interests of the proletariat can be served only by the overthrow of capitalism. It subordinates itself to a middle-class version of how best and most comfortably to preserve the capitalist order. The Peoples' Front is thus thoroughly and irrevocably non-proletarian, anti-proletarian."⁹

The People's Front Will not Win the Middle Class.¹⁰ The Trotskyists have argued that the People's Front cannot win over the middle classes to the cause of socialism and away from fascism for numerous reasons. There are only two basic solutions to the ills which beset the present world -- capitalism and socialism. Since the middle class has no program of its own, and since the People's Front does not fight for socialism, and therefore cannot win the middle class over to the socialist philosophy and program, it leaves that class to the consequences of their adherence to capitalism.

"The middle classes consist of those social groups intermediary between the two basic classes of modern society, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. . . . These groups lead in capitalist society an unstable and precarious existence, because of the ambiguity of their relation to the means of production -- they are not in the full sense either workers or capitalists. They seek, naturally, their self-preservation, the defense and, if possible, the betterment of their economic fortunes. But the nature of their social position makes it impossible for them to develop any independent program for the fulfillment of their own interests. . . ."¹¹

⁸Burnham, op. cit., p. 11.

⁹Ibid., p. 14.

¹⁰Goldman, op. cit., p. 19.

¹¹Burnham, op. cit., p. 26.

The middle class thus lacks a solution of its own. Left to flounder by the indecisiveness of the People's Front, which, again, offers no solution, it becomes prey for the wild-cat, fly-by-night proposals of the fascists who offer an easy road out of the wilderness into the promised land. Trotskyists have pointed out that these prophets, of course, deliver the middle class over to the fascist camp before it fully understands what has happened.

" . . . Far from winning the middle classes to the side of the workers, the Peoples' Front subordinates the workers to middle-class prejudices. It accepts a program built out of middle-class illusions -- illusions which the middle classes themselves are beginning to discard, and accepts the leadership of middle-class politicians. It gives up the independent class action of the workers, through which alone the revolution can be won, in return for -- nothing at all. The temporary 'alliance' superficially achieved in the Peoples' Front cannot possibly hold together for any length of time. The middle classes are looking for a way out; they are unable to find one of their own; the proletariat, by adopting the Peoples' Front policy, declines to offer them its socialist way out; and the middle classes are left ripe for picking by the fascist demagogues. The fascists are not modest or conciliatory in their approach, nor do they have any qualms about violence However false the doctrines of the fascists may be, the leadership they offer is bold and decisive; and the middle classes will follow it unless the leadership offered by the proletariat is even more bold and more decisive."¹²

Psychologically, the Trotskyists have further declared, the vacillations of the People's Front drive the frightened, uncertain Middle Class from the workers, whose uncertainties do not inspire confidence. When confronted with the necessary choice of aligning itself with the seemingly-losing, on-the-defensive proletariat, as against the ever-bolder, confident fascists (who are ever profuse in their promises), the middle class invariably chooses the latter. The tragedy here, the Trotskyists have argued, is that a proletarian program, boldly embarked upon could win the middle class over to an alliance with the working class, to whose ranks its members are constantly being ground down.

¹²Ibid., pp. 29-30.

"The mere statement of the position of the middle classes in modern society makes obvious the answer to the problem of 'winning' them. They are looking for a solution, a 'way out', and they have none of their own to offer They themselves are timid, frightened, hesitating; and they would not turn to a timid and hesitating leadership as a substitute. They themselves have discovered that bourgeois democracy has merely led them deeper and deeper into the abyss, and they are searching for something to take its place, not something to bolster it up again. . . . The 'alliance between the working class and the middle classes' can be formed only if the working class holds the leading position in that alliance, only if the alliance is founded on the clear, frank, unafraid assertion of the proletarian program -- for workers' power and for socialism. If, on the contrary, it is the bourgeoisie or their agents that give clear and uncompromising leadership, while the working class hides its program and gives way to middle-class prejudices, the middle classes are certain to go over to the side of the bourgeoisie, to the side that demonstrates that it means business, that it knows what it wants and is determined to go and get it."¹³

"It is false, thrice false, to affirm that the present petty bourgeoisie is not going to the working class parties because it fears 'extreme measures'. Quite the contrary. The lower petty bourgeoisie, its great masses, only see in the working class parties parliamentary machines. They do not believe in their strength, nor in their capacity to struggle, nor in their readiness this time to conduct the struggle to the end."¹⁴

"To bring the petty bourgeoisie to its side, the proletariat must win its confidence. And for that it must have confidence in its own strength.

"It must have a clear program of action and must be ready to struggle for power by all possible means. Tempered by its revolutionary party for a decisive and pitiless struggle, the proletariat says to the peasant and petty bourgeoisie of the cities: 'We are struggling for power. Here is our program. We are ready to discuss with you changes in this program. We will employ violence only against big capital and its lackeys, but with you toilers, we desire to conclude an alliance on the basis of a given program.' The peasants will understand such language. Only, they must have faith in the capacity of the proletariat to seize power."¹⁵

People's Front No Bulwark against Fascism. The People's Front cannot be regarded as a factor which will check the growth of fascism, if the true nature of fascism is correctly understood, the Trotskyists have said. Fascism is an inevitable phase in the development of capitalism, not something artificially induced by a reactionary clique on its own behalf.¹⁶ Nothing

¹³ Ibid., pp. 27-28.

¹⁴ Trotsky, Whither France? p. 19.

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 19-20.

¹⁶ Guerin, Fascism and Big Business, pp. 3-5.

short of the destruction of capitalism will make possible the defeat of fascism. But since the People's Front is not concerned with the abolition of capitalism, its efforts to stave off fascism must be sterile and abortive.¹⁷

" . . . The Peoples' Front cannot stop fascism. The theory of the Peoples' Front rests upon a false account of the nature of fascism. It explains fascism as a plot by a small group of extreme reactionaries, instead of as a normal development of capitalism in its period of decline, a development conditioned not by the wills or wishes of any individuals or groups of individuals (indeed, finance-capital accepts fascism unwillingly -- it is a far more costly and dangerous method of rule than parliamentarism) but by the inner nature of capitalist society. Consequently, fascism can be stopped in only one way: by the overthrow of capitalism. So long as capitalism remains, the causes of fascism remain; and from the causes, the effect will follow. But the Peoples' Front gives up, explicitly, the struggle for the overthrow of capitalism, and, therefore, cannot conceivably stop fascism."¹⁸

People's Front and Democracy. The attempt to justify the People's Front on the ground that it has preserved democracy has also been rejected. Trotskyists have distinguished bourgeois democracy from concrete democratic (i.e., proletarian) rights. Workers want to preserve the latter, they have held, but have nothing in common with the former. The People's Front has confused, or, at any rate, failed to distinguish between the two. Actually a People's Front is unnecessary to defend existing rights of the working class; this can be accomplished best by vigorous independent working class (united front) action.¹⁹

"The propaganda of the Peoples' Front systematically confuses the two conceptions of 'democracy' which we have distinguished: 'Democracy' as meaning the bourgeois-democratic state; and 'democracy' as meaning certain concrete social rights. In this way, it attempts to get the masses to believe that the defense of the concrete social rights is necessarily bound up with the defense of the bourgeois-democratic state. In this it should be noted that the Peoples' Front is exactly on a par with the liberal capitalist propaganda in this and every other democratic country. . . .

¹⁷Burnham, op. cit., pp. 32-33, 16.

¹⁸Burnham, op. cit., p. 32.

¹⁹Burnham, op. cit., pp. 33-37. Goldman, op. cit., pp. 18-19.

" . . . The truth is that the defense of the concrete rights is not merely, not bound up with the defense of bourgeois democracy, but can be accomplished only against the bourgeois democratic state, as against every form of capitalist rule. . . ."20

Collective Security, Soviet Bulwark?²¹ The origin of collective security has been traced by the Trotskyists to the efforts on the part of the victorious imperialist powers to enforce the Treaty of Versailles signed at the conclusion of the World War.²² A new application of this thesis was proposed by the Comintern, at Stalin's behest, it was alleged, after 1935. Reduced to its essence, the Comintern's plan of defending the Soviet Union, as the Trotskyists have seen and categorically rejected it, is this: There are "good" capitalist nations (the so-called democracies) and "bad" capitalist nations (the fascist powers) in the world today. In order to preserve itself, it is necessary for the Soviet Union to enter into collective security and non-aggression pacts with the "democracies" to defeat the fascist powers. To the various sections of the Comintern (the Communist parties of Great Britain, France, United States, etc.) are entrusted the responsibility and duty of getting their own capitalist governments to sign such pacts with the Soviet Union, and, in the event of war, enter upon the side of the Soviet Union, or enforce sanctions against the aggressive fascist countries who want to attack and destroy the Soviet Union. The collective strength of the democratic powers in alliance with the Soviet Union will thus defeat fascism and drive it from the face of the earth.²³

This analysis is regarded as faulty by the Trotskyists from beginning

²⁰Burnham, op. cit., pp. 35-36.

²¹Burnham, How to Fight War, pp. 7-9; The Peoples' Front, pp. 62-64. Socialist Workers Party, op. cit., p. 27.

²²Burnham, How to Fight War, pp. 7-8.

²³For a general analysis of the Trotskyist's position on war, see: West, War and the Workers. Burnham, The People's Front; How to Fight War. International Communist League, War and the Fourth International.

to end; there are no "good" and "bad" capitalist countries; they are all aggressor-nations which have engaged in colonial exploitation and imperialism in the past or present.²⁴ Capitalist France, England, etc. clearly

recognize the paramount nature of their imperialist claims. They will enter into collective security pacts with the Soviet Union only if clearly advantageous to themselves.²⁵ As soon as the danger of revolution arises

at home, or the opportunity presents itself of saving their imperialist interests by repudiating their alliance with the Soviet Union, they will not hesitate to scrap these treaties without a moment's notice.

"Diplomatic agreements, as a certain chancellor with some reason once remarked, are only 'scraps of paper'. It is nowhere written that they must survive even up to the outbreak of war. Not one of the treaties with the Soviet Union would survive the immediate threat of a social revolution in any part of Europe. Let the political crisis in Spain, to say nothing of France, enter a revolutionary phase, and the hope propounded by Lloyd George in savior-Hitler would irresistibly take possession of all bourgeois governments. On the other hand, if the unstable situation in Spain, France, Belgium, etc., should end in a triumph of reaction, there would again remain not a trace of the Soviet pacts. And finally, if the 'scraps of paper' should preserve their validity during the first period of military operations, there is not a doubt that groupings of forces in the decisive phase of the war would be determined by factors of incomparably more powerful significance than the oaths of diplomats, perjurers as they are by profession."²⁶

The crux of the war position of the Trotskyists has resolved itself to this: in the event of a war between Germany or Japan, for example, and the Soviet Union, should workers support such a war if their own governments become involved on the side of the U.S.S.R? The C.P. has answered the question affirmatively. Trotskyists have completely rejected this position which they have characterized as a betrayal of Marxism-Leninism and the cause of the proletariat. They have argued that support of the policies of their govern-

²⁴Draper, Are You Ready for War, pp. 5-7.

²⁵Idem.

²⁶Trotsky, The Revolution Betrayed, p. 228.

ments would be unjustifiable since the latter would enter the war only for imperialist reasons (to capture German or Japanese foreign markets or to destroy the rising power of these countries in Europe, Asia, etc.) which have nothing in common with the interests of the workers of their respective countries. Such a policy would bring fascism at home, and destroy the organizations of the working class.

In the last analysis, the Trotskyists have insisted, the best and only defense of the U.S.S.R. will be the independent action of the working class whose duty it will be to give every conceivable aid to the Soviet Union without involving their own government in actual hostilities. If workers cannot prevent war, at its outbreak they must preach revolutionary defeatism and attempt to turn the imperialist war into a civil war, overthrow their capitalist governments and establish a proletarian dictatorship -- the first step towards socialism.

"The international proletariat will not decline to defend the U.S.S.R. even if the latter should find itself forced into a military alliance with some imperialists against others. But in this case, even more than in any other, the international proletariat must safeguard its complete political independence from Soviet diplomacy and thereby also from the bureaucracy of the Third International.

" . . . Remaining the determined and devoted defender of the workers' state in the struggle with imperialism the international proletariat will not, however, become an ally of the imperialist allies of the U.S.S.R. The proletariat of a capitalist country which finds itself in an alliance with the U.S.S.R. must retain fully and completely its irreconcilable hostility to the imperialist government of its own country. . . ."²⁷

" . . . The defense of the U.S.S.R. is conceivable only if the international proletarian vanguard be independent of the policy of Soviet diplomacy, if there be complete freedom to show up its nationalist conservative methods, which are directed against the interests of the international revolution and thus also against the interests of the Soviet Union."²⁸

"Intransigent proletarian opposition to the imperialist ally of the

²⁷International Communist League, War and the Fourth International, pp.20-21.

²⁸Ibid., p. 19.

U.S.S.R. must develop, on the one hand, on the basis of international class policy, on the other, on the basis of the imperialist aims of the given government, the treacherous character of this 'alliance', its speculation on capitalist overturn in the U.S.S.R., etc. The policy of a proletarian party in an 'allied' as well as in an enemy imperialist country should therefore be directed towards the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the seizure of power. Only in this way can a real alliance with the U.S.S.R. be created and the first workers' state be saved from disaster."²⁹

"The danger of war and a defeat of the Soviet Union is a reality, but the revolution is also a reality. If the revolution does not prevent war, then war will help the revolution. . . Only the European proletariat, implacably opposing its bourgeoisie and in the same camp with them the 'friends of peace', can protect the Soviet Union from destruction, or from an 'allied' stab in the back. Even a military defeat of the Soviet Union would be only a short episode, in case of a victory of the proletariat in other countries. And on the other hand, no military victory can save the inheritance of the October revolution, if imperialism holds out in the rest of the world."³⁰

" . . . The Stalinist bureaucracy, through the People's Front, and through its alliances with the bourgeois-democratic powers, prepares not the defense but the defeat of the Soviet Union. The defense of the first workers' state can rest only on the international working class, in the last analysis can be accomplished only through the extension of the workers' revolution to other countries. The price exacted for 'aid' by French or British or American imperialism could only be: liquidation of the revolution, and restoration of capitalist property relations The true defense of the Soviet Union is the world prosecution of the class struggle. And, since the policy of Stalinism acts to suppress the class struggle throughout the world, the defense of the Soviet Union must be undertaken not in common with but against the Stalinist bureaucracy. The unrelenting struggle against Stalinism is a necessary condition for the defense of the Soviet Union."³¹

Sanctions Mean War. Sanctions, or the national imposition of various penalties against a country violating a League covenant, treaty or collective security pact have been likewise condemned; the logic of sanctions is also war.

" . . . League sanctions are, of course, nothing else than sanctions undertaken by the leading member states of the League. The League, as we have seen, is only the instrument of its dominant members. Support of

²⁹ Ibid., p. 21.

³⁰ Trotsky, The Revolution Betrayed, pp. 231-232.

³¹ Buflham, op. cit., p. 64.

League sanctions, therefore, is exactly the same as support of sanctions applied by individual nations -- e.g., by Great Britain or France.

"But sanctions are war measures. They include withdrawal of financial credit, embargoes on trade, various forms of boycott. To enforce them genuinely would require a blockade of the country against whom the sanctions were invoked. The probable, the almost certain outcome of such a blockade, as history has so often proved, is war -- since the blockaded nation cannot accept such a measure peacefully without surrendering political sovereignty.

"Thus it follows that sanctions must be either ineffectual -- a kind of large-scale bluff -- or they must lead to war."³²

In place of sanctions imposed and carried out by their capitalist governments, the Trotskyists have advocated sanctions which do not compromise their philosophy and principles: working class sanctions.

" . . . Only sanctions which are results of the independent and autonomous actions of the working class are of any value in the revolutionary struggle against war -- since only these separate the class from the state and the class enemy, and only these build the fighting strength of the workers, which is alone the road to workers' power and thus to the defeat of war. Mass demonstrations, strikes, labor boycotts, defense funds for material aid to Ethiopia, refusal to load munitions for Italy, revolutionary agitation for Marxism as it applies to the war crisis, these are such sanctions as the working class must make use of. They are romantic and utopian? If so, then the revolutionary struggle is itself ineffectual, romantic and utopian. Perhaps such sanctions will not 'solve' the present crisis. But they, and they alone, will help steel the class, materially and ideologically, for the struggle to come -- the struggle for workers' power, which is, in the end, the only solution."³³

Opposition to Collective Security not Pacifism. The refusal of the Trotskyists to support their government's participation in a struggle on the side of the Soviet Union does not mean that they are pacifists, they have said; on the contrary, pacifism and revolutionary Marxism have nothing in common.

"We are not pacifists. We consider a revolutionary war just as much a means of proletarian policy as an uprising. Our attitude to war is determined not by the legalistic formula of 'aggression' but by the question of which class carries on the war and for what aims"³⁴

³²West, op. cit., p. 31.

³³Ibid., p. 33.

³⁴International Communist League, op. cit., p. 18.

"If the proletariat should find it beyond its power to prevent war by means of revolution, -- and this is the only means of preventing war, -- the workers, together with the whole people will be forced to participate in the army and in war. Individualistic and anarchistic slogans of refusal to undergo military service, passive resistance, desertion, sabotage are in basic contradiction to the methods of the proletarian revolution . . .³⁵

Opposition to League of Nations. Trotskyists have decried Russia's entrance into the League of Nations as an anti-Leninist policy which has weakened rather than strengthened the Soviet Union.

" . . . the struggle against imperialist war requires the most scathing exposures of the role of the League. Far from giving any support whatever to the League, far from creating any hopes in what it can do to preserve peace, the League must be shown before the masses as an instrument of imperialism, of the war-makers. Its 'moral authority' must be, not bolstered, but smashed. Only thus can it be removed as an obstacle to the struggle against war.

"What then must we say of those who promote these illusions about the League in the eyes of the masses? These brave liberals and false socialists and pious ministers -- these Litvinovs and Blums and Browders? We must brand them, for this, as what they are -- as betrayers. By binding the masses to the League, they bind them thereby to the controlling member states -- they join them to the class enemy, and prepare, through the instrumentality of the League, to hand the masses over to the war-makers when the war, after suitable anointing by the League, begins."³⁶

Past Failures of the People's Front. The inglorious failures of the People's Front, the Trotskyists have asserted, are to be seen everywhere. In France, the People's Front was a failure.³⁷ Instead of effectively stopping fascism, the fascists continued to put up a bolder front and were allowed to grow.³⁸ Instead of leading the French workers to the achievement of greater and greater demands, the Trotskyists alleged, the People's Front government actively interfered with their freedom of speech, suppressed their strikes and told them 'they must know how to end a strike as well as how to begin one'.³⁹ In international affairs, the People's government

³⁵Ibid., p. 33.

³⁶West, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

³⁷Trotsky, Whither France? passim. Burnham, People's Front, pp. 39-46.

³⁸Burnham, op. cit., p. 43.

³⁹Ibid., pp. 44-45.

likewise was guilty of strange anti-proletarian conduct; it made military loans to Poland, whose government was in its incipient stages of fascism. Instead of giving its fullest support to the Loyalist Spanish government engaged in a life-and-death struggle with fascism, it closed the frontier to military supplies and supported "non-intervention" pacts whose only purpose was to prevent aid from reaching the Spanish workers, but not their assailants.⁴⁰ In short, the Trotskyists contended, instead of advancing a bold proletarian program which was in keeping with the high degree of political maturity and class consciousness of the French workers, the People's Front offered the program of the French bourgeoisie, the Radical-Socialist Party whose chief interest lay in preserving the capitalist system; this acted as a brake upon the proletariat which as a class was objectively ready for another revolution.⁴¹

"All the political facts prove that there is no basis for the People's Front either in the social relations of France or in the political moods of the masses. This policy is imposed from above: by the Radical bourgeoisie, by the Socialist business men and careerists, by the Soviet diplomats and their 'Communist' lackeys. All together they have done everything possible by means of the most dishonest of all electoral systems, in order to dupe and rob politically the popular masses and to distort their real will. . . ."⁴²

In summary, the Trotskyists have declared that the concrete result of the People's Front has been the rise of Daladier whose "regime is leading France swiftly to fascism".⁴³

Spain.⁴⁴ The collapse of the Spanish People's Front and the defeat of Loyalist Spain have been further proof to the Trotskyists of the complete bankruptcy of popular frontism. The People's Front government of

⁴⁰Idem.

⁴¹Trotsky, op. cit., p. 129.

⁴²Trotsky, op. cit., p. 143.

⁴³Socialist Appeal, Nov. 26, 1938, p. 6.

⁴⁴For general survey see Burnham, The People's Front, pp. 47-52. Morrow, The Civil War in Spain, passim; Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Spain, passim.

Spain stood discredited in the eyes of the Trotskyists from the very beginning, they maintained. After its rise to power in February, 1937, it forcibly dispersed peasants who took over some of the large estate; it also suppressed strikes; it censored workers' newspapers; it interfered with the workers' right of peaceable assembly; but it did nothing to stop the growing power of the fascists which finally culminated in the outbreak of July, 1936.⁴⁵ After Franco's coup, the People's Front government of Spain showed the characteristic vacillations of its French counterpart, the Trotskyists charged. Instead of arming the workers, it attempted to come to terms with the insurgents. Only the mass pressure of workers who stormed the armories and set up defenses against the rebels awakened the government. Its political errors in the subsequent months were many. It did not proclaim that the war against Franco and the war for a Soviet Spain were one and the same; it spoke of the struggle of Democracy versus Fascism, the Stalinist cry. Such spontaneous movements as workers' soviets and councils were discouraged. The land problem remained unsolved. Instead of raising such slogans as "Land for the Peasants", and "Freedom of Morocco", it blindly followed the lead of the Comintern and limited the struggle to "democracy" lest the capitalist allies of the Soviet Union be antagonized. Under the tutelage of the Spanish G.P.U., it spent much of its efforts in stifling, persecuting, "framing", torturing, and even murdering the only genuine revolutionary elements in Spain, the Trotskyists, the POUM-ists, and sections of the Anarcho-Syndicalists who attempted to make a peasants' and workers' revolution, the Trotskyists charged.⁴⁶

⁴⁵Burnham, op. cit., pp. 48-49. Goldman, What is Socialism? pp. 19-20.

⁴⁶Burnham, op. cit., pp. 49-52. Morrow, Revolution and Counter-Revolution, in Spain, pp. 67-68. Socialist Appeal, May 28, 1938, pp. 1,3; Aug. 6, 1938, pp. 3-4; Nov. 26, 1938, pp. 3,6.

" . . . The task of Marxists in Spain was to promote and lead the process of the extension of workers' power; to transform the war against Franco into a revolutionary war for workers' power and for socialism; to act along the perspective of the transfer of state power to the workers' and peasants' and soldiers' committees. The Peoples' Front leaders of the Spanish working-class parties did just the opposite. . . ."⁴⁷

" . . . The government, as a bourgeois government has been compelled to check the extension of proletarian class power, and progressively to liquidate the steps that had already been taken. In the name of a 'unified command' it has cut off the development toward a genuine workers' army, and reconstituted the militia into a republican army. In the name of law and order, it has eliminated the workers' police in the cities, enforcing proletarian justice, and has set up a republican police force, incorporating institutions and individuals already demonstrated to be betrayers of the workers' struggle. In the name of efficient production, it breaks down genuine workers' control of the factories. . . ."⁴⁸

For the People's Front government failure was inevitable, the Trotskyists held. It aimed at re-establishing the very kind of social order which brought on the perennial crises of Republican days. The People's Front government pursued the policies of the Social Democracy when only the revolutionary Marxism of Lenin could bring defeat to the Fascists, and a Workers' and Peasants' Soviet in Spain.

" . . . If the workers succeed, in spite of the government, in defeating the armies of Franco, they will only find themselves bound to the capitalist order as enforced by the People's Front. Unless they break with Popular Frontism, they will find -- and this is the real tragedy of Spain -- that they have given their lives and their blood in vain, that their selfless and heroic sacrifice, far from bringing emancipation, will have left them where they began, tied hand and foot in the property relations of capitalist exploitation."⁴⁹

Thus again, the Trotskyists alleged, the defeat of Spain is a further proof of the correctness of their fundamental theses, from which certain lessons should not be forgotten.⁵⁰

⁴⁷Burnham, op. cit., p. 50.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 51.

⁴⁹Idem.

⁵⁰Trotsky, "The Lesson of Spain," Socialist Appeal, Jan. 8, 1938, pp. 2-3; Jan. 15, 1938, pp. 4-5; "The Tragedy of Spain," Socialist Appeal, Feb. 10, 1939, p. 1. Socialist Appeal, July 23, 1938, p. 3; March 14, 1939, pp. 1, 3.

"The Salvation of Spain lay, first of all, in following a policy of class struggle in Spain, and it was abandoned for the fatal perspective of currying favor with the 'great democracies'. The unmitterable tragedy of the Spanish workers is that the criminal policy of their Stalinist-Socialist-Anarchist leadership prevailed to the bitter end."⁵¹

"No coalition with the bourgeoisie, left or right! No political support to a Popular Front government! Arming of the workers before the outbreak of civil war; arming of the workers independently of the government and in spite of the government! These are the elementary lessons of the outbreak of the Spanish civil war."⁵²

"And take the power! Above all, take the power, and do not surrender it to the 'liberal' traitors, the French Azanas. Put the power in the firm hands of workers who will remain loyal to their own flesh and blood. Keep the power in the hands of those who stand to lose everything by fascism.

"That, above all, is the lesson of Spain. Had the workers and peasants taken the power into their own hands, there would have been no Bilbaos and no Barcelonas surrendered intact to the fascists. There would have been no crawling pleas to the Blums and Chamberlains for arms, but instead a clarion call to the masses everywhere to organize the shipment of arms and in the process to take the power in their own countries into their own hands, in France first of all. The wave of revolution inspired by the Russian Revolution of October, 1917 would have risen again, enriched by all the intervening lessons.

"Fight or die! these are the only alternatives. Nothing is impossible for the working class when it follows a revolutionary course! . . ."⁵³

Czechoslovakia.⁵⁴ The events leading up to and following the Munich Pact which resulted in the complete dismemberment of Czechoslovakia were regarded by the Trotskyists as a fulfillment of their predictions and definitive proof of the bankruptcy of popular frontism and collective security as methods of preserving "democracy" and defeating fascism. Munich, and after, have concretely proved, the S.W.P. has alleged, that the capitalist democracies cannot be relied upon to save democracy and fulfill collec-

⁵¹ Socialist Appeal, Feb. 4, 1939, p. 3.

⁵² Morrow, "Barcelona and France's Future," New International, (Feb., 1939) Vol. V, No. 2, p. 40.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 41.

⁵⁴ "The Editor's Comments," New International (Oct., 1938), Vol. IV, No. 10, pp. 291-292. Spector, "The Popular Front's Guilt," New International (Nov., 1938), Vol. IV, No. 11, pp. 329-330. Julik, "The Great Test," New International (March, 1939), Vol. V, No. 3, pp. 88-90. Trotsky, "Social-Patriotic Sophistry," New International (Nov., 1938), Vol. IV, No. 11, pp. 328; "A Fresh Lesson," New International (Dec., 1938), Vol. IV, No. 12, pp. 358-366. Socialist Appeal, Oct. 1, 1938, pp. 1, 3; Oct. 5, 1938, pp. 1-2; March 17, 1939, p. 1; March 21, 1939, pp. 1, 3.

tive security pacts when it is to their interest to do otherwise.

"Collective Security proved to be a colossal swindle. What happened at Munich was a more grandiose repetition of the sanctions farce during the Italo-Ethiopian war. The Munich accord writes finis to the successive hoaxes of the Covenant of the League, the Kellogg Pact to outlaw war, the Nine-Power Treaty to safeguard China and all the rest of the legalistic skulduggery that was to lull the peoples into the illusion that 'power politics' had given way to the 'reign of law', but was in reality a means of sanctifying the existing partition of the world among the powers on the basis of their relation of forces in 1918. All that the collective security talk did was to blunt the edge of the revolutionary struggle against war and militarism inside the mass movement and thereby enable Hitler, with the acquiescence of the 'democratic' imperialisms to advance his interests in Central Europe and effect a new equilibrium. Collective Security was as little capable of stopping Hitler as sanctions stopped Mussolini.

Munich enables us to draw a fresh balance of the condition of 'democracy'⁵⁵

The same lesson must be drawn from the Czech crisis, the S.W.P. has alleged: the futility of workers' reliance upon the "democracies" to save them from fascism. Even "the 'democratic' bourgeoisie" in Czechoslovakia, quickly yielded to Hitler and turned towards fascism rather than jeopardize their property and profits. "Fight Hitlerism By Revolution" was the slogan raised by the S.W.P. for workers in Czechoslovakia and elsewhere.

"The democratic capitalist governments are interested in fighting Hitler only to protect their right to rob and exploit the colonial and semi-colonial slaves and the workers in the home countries.

"It is not worth a single drop of the blood of any worker to stop Hitler for the benefit of the capitalists in the 'democratic' countries. It is worth everything to destroy Hitlerism throughout the world.

"The workers can stop Hitler in only one way. They must begin the job in their own country by destroying the capitalist system and they will then find it easy to get rid of Hitler in Germany.

"Let the workers take over power in England, in France and in this country. Let them abolish the capitalist system which is the mother of all fascist movements. Let them establish a Workers' Government which will give the factories to the workers and the land to the farmers. Under such a government the great masses of the people will fight Hitler and Hitlerism to the bitter end.

"And a Workers' Government will call upon the German workers to revolt against Hitler and the German workers can be counted on to answer such a call without hesitation.

⁵⁵Spector, op. cit., p. 330.

"At present Hitler can tell the German workers that England, France and the United States are preparing for war against Germany because the capitalists of those countries want to enslave the German people. And the German workers can readily see that Chamberlain and Daladier are not fighting for democracy.

"But when the German workers will see that the workers of England, France and the United States have thrown the capitalists out of power, it will be impossible for Hitler to fool them. They will do to Hitler and the German capitalists what the workers of France, England and the United States did to their capitalists."⁵⁶

Criticism of Communist Party, U.S.A. (Since 1935)

Sudden Change of Line. The abandonment of social-fascism, dual unionism, and the united-front-from-below by the Seventh World Congress of the C.I., and its adoption of the People's Front orientation, led to corresponding changes in all sections of the Comintern, including the Communist Party, U.S.A. These changes were effected upon the American scene by arbitrary rulings from above, the Trotskyists alleged; at no time was the rank-and-file of the C.P. membership consulted about the impending changes and given a chance to express its views.

"No discussion on the formulation of any important policy is permitted to the membership. Within the last ten years there has, in practice, not been a single instance where the rank and file could listen to different opinions on a vital question and decide on the basis of an honest presentation of different points of view. Policies on all important questions are formulated by the top leadership subject to the control of the Moscow bureaucrats. On the most important questions decisions are made in Moscow and the American 'Charlie McCarthys' accept them without question. For the rank and file there is left only the duty to carry out the policies. . .¹

The following are the basic criticisms made by the Socialist Workers party of the Communist party: Its alleged: (1) support of American imperialist policies in the Far East and Latin America; (2) endorsement of Roosevelt and the New Deal; (3) reactionary and opportunistic trade union policies and

⁵⁶Socialist Appeal, March 28, 1939, p. 1.

¹Goldman, op. cit., p. 37.

practices; (4) distortion and falsification of American history; (5) segregation of its membership from all contacts with Trotskyists and other anti-Stalinist forces.

Support of American Imperialism.² The Trotskyists have charged that in order to carry out the basic policy of the Comintern of aligning the "democratic" nations of the world on the side of the Soviet Union in a collective security pact against the fascist countries ("Democracy versus Fascism"), the C.P., U.S.A. has attempted to establish an identity of interests between the United States and the Soviet Union; it has pointed to their alleged common enemies, Germany and Japan, and has attempted to secure common action against them. The Trotskyists have further alleged that an identity of interests has not been established between the Soviet Union and American imperialism in Latin America and the Far East. In other words, the S.W.P. has maintained, the C.P. has been willing to involve the American workers in a war to defend American imperialism on the mistaken theory that the Soviet Union will be benefitted by such a policy.

In a written debate on collective security, Browder made many statements which the Trotskyists scored as jingoistic and imperialistic.

"Browder's article is filled with the frankest jingo appeals to the interests of U.S. imperialism. 'A continuance of isolation policies by the United States will surely convince the arrogant militarists of Tokyo that now is the time for them to take over the Philippines, Hawaii, Guam and Alaska, as guarantees against the future, when the United States might dare. From that it would not be a large step to recall how much more successful are Japanese than Americans in cultivating the beautiful and rich lands in California.' This is the crux of Browder's argument.

"He continues it by stating that the United States is in more danger from Japan than is the Soviet Union. 'A continuance of the same line (pursued up to now by Japan) leads her not to Vladivostock, Habarovsk and Chita, but rather to Manila, Honolulu and Nome.' That is to say, Browder's central argument in favor of his own war position is that his policy alone

²Socialist Workers Party, Declaration of Principles and Constitution, p. 16. Burnham, How to Fight War, pp. 7-9. New Militant, March 21, 1936, p. 3.

can protect and defend -- what? The working class? The struggle for socialism? Not in the least. His policy, he says in his own words, alone can defend the possessions of U. S. imperialism."³

Other evidences of the C.P.'s alleged jingoism have been offered by the Trotskyists. In the American Student Union, alleged to be Stalinist-controlled, the resolutions of the Fourth Annual Convention opposed the Oxford oath, favored national defense and the R.O.T.C., but said nothing about American imperialism and limitation upon expenditures for armaments.⁴ The League for Peace and Democracy, also said to be Stalinist-controlled, adopted similar policies declared to be pro-war.⁵ Finally, the Trotskyists charged, Earl Browder himself expressed his approval of armament appropriations by the United States (Daily Worker of Dec. 7, 1938, quoted by the Trotskyists) on grounds that they are " . . . for the defense of the liberty and independence of our own and other peoples. . . "⁶

Finally, it has been alleged, so far has Browder gone in his support of American patriotism and imperialism that he actually stated his willingness to support the United States government in a war against the Soviet Union.⁷

Endorsement of Roosevelt and the New Deal. The Trotskyists have condemned the C.P. reversal in supporting Roosevelt and the New Deal. This change in line became concretely apparent in the presidential election campaign of 1936, they declared. F.D. Roosevelt, who formerly had been condemned by Communists as a dangerous reactionary with fascist tendencies, suddenly became the great liberal about whom all progressive elements had to

³Burnham, op. cit., pp. 5-6.

⁴Socialist Appeal, Jan. 7, 1939, p. 2. Burnham, The People's Front, p. 58.

⁵Socialist Appeal, Dec. 11, 1937, p. 4. Burnham, op. cit., p. 59.

⁶Socialist Appeal, Dec. 17, 1938, p. 4.

⁷Trotsky, "A Great Achievement," New International (Oct., 1938), Vol. IV, No. 10, p. 293. Draper, Are You Ready for War? pp. 14-15.

rally against the new fascist, Alf Landon, who was being aided by Hearst and the Liberty League. In consequence, the Trotskyists stated, the Communist party raised two incompatible slogans: "Defeat Landon at all Costs!" and "Vote for Earl Browder". The results were that many Communist sympathizers voted for Roosevelt, the left vote was extremely small, and the Communist party lost its place on the ballot in New York State.⁸

The Trotskyists have alleged that the real reason why the C.P. has continued to support Roosevelt is to be found in his speech at Chicago, on October 5th, 1937 ("quarantine the aggressor" speech); it indicated the possibility of winning him as an ally to their proposal of a collective security pact between the United States and the Soviet Union. As long as this possibility remains, the Trotskyists have alleged, the C.P. will support Roosevelt.⁹

Reactionary Trade Union Policies. In the trade unions, too, the Trotskyists have declared, militancy has given way to conciliation, opportunism and People's Frontism. Criticism of trade union bureaucrats is guarded and less outspoken; hopeless sectarianism has been replaced by a policy of unity at all costs. The Trotskyists have maintained that the present role of the Communists can be understood only in terms of C.P. politics: the Communist party has placed the desire to build up collective security sentiment ahead of trade union problems. Consequently, it has entered into negotiations and has made deals with all elements which can be depended upon to support its resolutions for collective security.¹⁰ For example, the Trotskyists have alleged that the policies pursued by the Commu-

⁸Burnham, The People's Front, pp. 54-55.

⁹Gates, "Browder's Two Roosevelts," New International (Aug., 1938), Vol. IV, No. 8, pp. 233-235.

¹⁰Socialist Appeal, Feb. 12, 1937, p. 2.

nists in the Painters Union of New York,¹¹ the Teachers Union of New York,¹²
and the United Auto Workers Union of Detroit,¹³ have brought bankruptcy and
ruin to militant trade unionism.

"Within the labor movement, the Communist Party of the United States plays a reactionary role. Indeed, its policy in practice is not less reactionary than that of the old-line trade union bureaucrats with whom it is allied. The primary concern of the Communist Party is not with the immediate needs of the workers and their unions; it seeks only to manipulate the unions in accordance with the requirements of the People's Front in preparing the social-patriotic betrayal to the war. The Stalinists within the unions are ready to make any deal whatever with either bureaucrats or bosses, to engineer any type of sell-out, and in general devote their energies to the crushing of every sign of progressive and militant opposition. In their use of gangsterism, lies, frame-ups, bureaucratism, the Stalinists in the unions are distinguished from the older style reactionary bureaucrats only by the greater skill, thoroughness, and ruthlessness of the Stalinists in applying their anti-working class and counter-revolutionary methods."¹⁴

Falsification of American History. In order to show that it has embodied America's revolutionary tradition, the C.P. has completely rewritten and distorted American history, the S.W.P. has alleged. Its apotheosis of Jefferson as the prototype of the Twentieth Century Americanism espoused by the Communist party has been ridiculed; likewise its treatment of other American figures -- Patrick Henry, Paul Revere, Daniel Boone, etc.¹⁵ The greatest distortion of all has been the effort of the C.P. to draw a parallel between Trotsky and Aaron Burr -- both branded traitors to a great
¹⁶
cause.

¹¹Socialist Appeal, May 7, 1938, p. 4; May 14, 1938, p. 4; May 21, 1938, p. 3; May 28, 1938, p. 3; June 4, 1938, p. 4.

¹²Socialist Appeal, Jan. 7, 1939, pp. 1,4.

¹³Socialist Appeal, Sept. 17, 1938, pp. 1,3; May 14, 1938, pp. 1,4. Feb. 14, 1939, p. 1; March 7, 1939, pp. 1-2.

¹⁴Socialist Workers Party, op. cit., p. 17.

¹⁵Socialist Appeal, March 7, 1939, p. 4; March 10, 1939, p. 4.

¹⁶Novak, "History to Order," New International (May, 1938), Vol. IV, No. 5, pp. 156-157.

The Communist party has also been accused of making notable omissions in re-publishing the writings of Lenin ("Selected Works") in order to do violence to the claims of Trotsky, and present Stalin as the great expounder of Leninism.¹⁷

Segregation of C.P. Membership from Trotskyists. The Trotskyists have maintained that the attempt on the part of the C.P. to isolate its members from Trotskyists (and Lovestoneites) by constitutional decree is certain evidence that its leadership has much to fear from such contacts.

"But what a confession of bankruptcy -- to write into the party constitution a decree quarantining the followers of Earl Browder against outside ideological influences!"¹⁸

The answer of the Trotskyists has been to address a series of Open Letters to members of the Communist party, pointing out the complete failure of the People's Front as evidenced by the events of Spain, Czechoslovakia, China and France, and that the Communist party no longer is carrying on in the spirit of Lenin, hence they must break with Stalinism and join the Socialist Workers party.¹⁹

¹⁷Carter, "A New Lenin Book," New International (July, 1938), Vol. IV, No. 7, pp. 219-220.

¹⁸Socialist Appeal, May 21, 1938, p. 4.

¹⁹Socialist Appeal, May 28, 1938, p. 1; Oct. 1, 1938, p. 4; Feb. 28, 1939, pp. 1,3.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST LEAGUE - FOURTH INTERNATIONAL -- CRITICISM OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY, U.S.S.R.

The criticisms of the fundamental orientation of the Communist Party, U.S.S.R., are implicit, to a very large measure, in those made of the Comintern, whose general line, the Trotskyists have accused Stalin of having formulated. In addition, however, there have been other points of disagreement which have arisen from the manner in which the Soviet Union has been administered. Reduced to its fundamentals, the criticisms of the Left Opposition have been directed against the alleged abuses resulting from Stalin's mismanagement of the U.S.S.R.¹

The Trotskyist complaints have centered chiefly about these points:

(1) Soviet economy: the problem of the peasant; collectivization; the five-year plans; labor's productivity; the money question and inflation. (2) Soviet polity: foreign policy; the new constitution; the one-party system; persecution of the Opposition; relations with Hitler and the refugee problem. (3) Soviet culture: changing status of the family, youth and culture.²

¹For general survey, see Trotsky, The Revolution Betrayed. Serge, Russia Twenty Years After. James, World Revolution, 1917-1936, Chapters VI-XIV. "The Russian Revolution 17 Years After," New International (November, 1934), Vol. I, No. 4, pp. 97-98. "Where Is Stalinism Leading Russia?" New International (March, 1935), Vol. II, No. 2, pp. 37-40. Schachtman, "Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Russia," New International (Jan. 1938), Vol. IV, No. 1, pp. 8-13. Trotsky, "U.S.S.R. Faces Crisis on Twentieth Anniversary of October Revolution," Socialist Appeal, Nov. 6, 1937, pp. 1-8.

²Trotsky deals with these problems in detail in The Revolution Betrayed, upon which volume this section is chiefly based. At best only a cursory survey is possible here.

3
Soviet Economy

It is not possible to present the many detailed criticisms made by the Left Opposition of the economic policies pursued by the Stalin regime since (and even before) the inauguration of the first five-year plan in 1928. The criticisms deal with such fundamental questions, such as the rate of industrialization, collectivization of the peasants and kulaks, the earnings and well-being of the workers, and inflation. At best only a brief summary is possible.

Collectivization and the Five-Year Plans.⁴ The disagreements between the forces of Stalin and the Left Opposition on the best means of hastening the economic growth of the U.S.S.R. sharpened most acutely about 1923. The New Economic Policy ("NEP") inaugurated by Lenin in 1921, which was in essence a concession to the peasants and foreign capitalists, resulted in increased rural and industrial production. From these revivals the question which arose was how Soviet industry and agriculture could best be built up in a manner consistent with the new regime. The proposals for a five-year plan put forth by the Left Opposition from 1923 (Trotsky has pointed out that in that year the name had not come into general use) to 1928 was scorned and ridiculed by Stalin.

" . . . The demand for a five-year plan, when advanced by the Opposition in 1923, was met with mockery in the spirit of the petty bourgeois who fears 'a leap into the unknown'. As late as April 1927, Stalin asserted at a plenary meeting of the Central Committee that to attempt to build the Dnieperstroy hydro-electric station would be the same thing for us as for a muzhik to buy a gramophone instead of a cow. This winged aphorism summed up the whole program. . . ."⁵

³Serge, op. cit., pp. 163-178. James, op. cit., pp. 268-304.

⁴Trotsky, The Revolution Betrayed, p. 24.

⁵Trotsky, op. cit., p. 29.

Those adhering to the Left Opposition viewpoint were characterized as advocates of "super-industrialization".⁶

On the land question, Trotsky declared that he made two proposals: an increased taxation on the kulaks (the wealthy peasants who were profiting enormously from the NEP), and a slow but steady growth in farm collectivization.

"'To accelerate industrialization,' answered the representative of the Opposition at the party conference in 1926, 'in particular by way of increased taxation on the kulak, will produce a large mass of goods and lower market prices, and this will be to the advantage both of the worker and of the majority of the peasants. . . . Face to the village does not mean turn your back to industry; it means industry to the village. For the 'face' of the state, if it does not include industry, is of no use to the village.'"⁷

On the question of collectivization, the Left Opposition declared again in 1926:

"The party ought to resist and crush all tendencies directed to the annulment or undermining of the nationalization of land, one of the pillars of the proletarian dictatorship."⁸

"To the growth of individual farming in the country we must oppose a swifter growth of the collective farms. It is necessary systematically year by year to set aside a considerable sum to aid the poor peasant organized in collectives. The whole work of the co-operatives ought to be imbued with the purpose of converting small production into a vast collectivized production."⁹

The answer of the official party representatives, according to Trotsky, was a flat refusal to embark upon an industrialization plan, a campaign against the kulaks, or any measures towards collectivization of the peasant lands. Bukharin's criticisms against Trotsky, "the underestimation of the peasantry" and "super-industrialization" prevailed,¹⁰ as did Bukharin's poli-

⁶Idem.

⁷Ibid., p. 30.

⁸Ibid., p. 28.

⁹Idem.

¹⁰Trotsky, The Stalin School of Falsification, p. xxx.

cy of "tortoise tempo".¹¹

"In answer Stalin thundered against the 'fantastic plans' of the Opposition. Industry must not 'rush ahead, breaking away from agriculture and abandoning the tempo of accumulation in our country'. The party decisions continued to repeat these maxims of passive accommodation to the well-off upper circles of the peasantry. The 15th party congress, meeting in December 1927 for the final smashing of the 'super-industrializers', gave warning of 'the danger of a too great involvement of state capital in big construction'"12

In 1927 and 1928, Trotsky has declared, the party answer on the peasant question was the same:

"Rykov, then still head of the government, announced in July 1928: 'To develop individual farms is . . . the chief task of the party.' And Stalin seconded him: 'There are people who think that individual farms have exhausted their usefulness, that we should not support them. . . . These people have nothing in common with the line of our party.'"13

" . . . During the preparations for the 15th party congress, whose task was to expel the Left Opposition, Molotov, the future president of the Soviet of People's Commissars, said repeatedly: 'We must not slip down (!) into poor peasant illusions about the collectivization of the broad peasant masses. In the present circumstances it is no longer possible.'"14

On the kulak question, the party position was enunciated by Bukharin.

" . . . Bukharin, the theoretician of the ruling faction at that time, tossed to the peasantry his famous slogan, 'Get rich!' In the language of theory that was supposed to mean a gradual growing of the kulaks into socialism. In practice it meant the enrichment of the minority at the expense of the overwhelming majority."15

In 1929 came what Trotsky has characterized as a "sharp turn" in Soviet economy and another indication of the "zigzags of leadership"; he has stated that his own fundamental ideas of a planned economy, collectivization of the land, and a firm policy for dealing with the kulaks, were taken over by the official party (without any acknowledgement as such).¹⁶

¹¹Trotsky, The Revolution Betrayed, p. 35.

¹²Ibid., p. 30.

¹³Ibid., p. 33.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 28-29.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 26.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 35.

" . . . In November 1929, Stalin, abandoning his own vacillations, announced the end of individual farming. The peasants, he said, are entering the collective farms 'in whole villages, counties and even provinces'. Yakovlev, who two years before had insisted that the collectives would for many years remain only 'islands in a sea of peasant holdings', now received an order as People's Commissar of Agriculture to 'liquidate the kulaks as a class', and establish complete collectivization at 'the earliest possible date'. . . .¹⁷

Immediately, Trotsky has reported, the party started industrialization and collectivization with a vengeance; old ideas, old lines went by the board. This sudden, drastic and almost fateful policy (again, according to Trotsky) resulted from the effort of the dominant forces in the party to recoup the losses in industry and agriculture incurred by the dilatory policies pursued prior to 1929, policies against which Trotsky has said he had issued his dire warnings.

"The forced character of this new course arose from the necessity of finding some salvation from the consequences of the policy of 1923-1928. But even so, collectivization could and should have assumed a more reasonable tempo and more deliberated forms. Having in its hands both the power and the industries, the bureaucracy could have regulated the process without carrying the nation to the edge of disaster. They could have, and should have, adopted tempos better corresponding to the material and moral resources of the country. . . .¹⁸

Shortly after the inauguration of the first five-year plan (1928), the gist of Trotsky's criticism was that industrialization was proceeding too rapidly, that the pace should be slowed down because it was making too great demands upon the producers of raw materials and was building industry at the expense of necessary consumers' products from which workers were suffering a great dearth.

"The supply to the factories of food and raw materials grew worse from season to season. Unbearable working conditions caused a migration of labor power, malingering, careless work, breakdown of machines, a high percentage of trashy products and a general low quality. The average productivity of labor declined 11.7 per cent in 1931. According to an incidental acknowledgement of Molotov, printed in the whole Soviet press,

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 37.

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 40-41.

industrial production in 1932 rose only 8.5 per cent, instead of the 36 per cent indicated by the year's plan. To be sure, the world was informed soon after this that the five-year plan had been fulfilled in four years and three months. But that means only that the cynicism of the bureaucracy in its manipulation of statistics and public opinion is without limit . . .¹⁹

Similarly, the new policies towards the kulak and agricultural collectivization were sweepingly condemned by Trotsky. The kulak, who under the old policy was non-existent, suddenly became omnipresent, even controlling important local sections of the Communist party.²⁰ All Russia suddenly became mobilized in a great war for the "liquidation of the kulaks as a class". The consequence was a great unorganized campaign of sabotage on their part which resulted in less planting, concealment of crops and animals, and the wholesale destruction of cattle.²¹

" . . . The press which only yesterday had been denying the existence of the kulaks, today, on a signal from above, discovered them not only in the villages, but in the party itself. It was revealed that the communist nuclei were frequently dominated by rich peasants possessing complicated machinery, employing hired labor, concealing from the government hundreds and thousands of poods of grain, and implacably denouncing the 'Trotskyist' policy. The newspapers vied with each other in printing sensational exposures of how kulaks in the position of local secretaries were denying admission to the party to poor peasants and hired hands. All the old criteria were turned upside down; minuses and pluses changed places."²²

The new policy of complete collectivization also proved a tragedy from the peasants viewpoint, according to Trotsky. The tempo was too rapid, and the peasants were ill-prepared for the suddenness with which it was undertaken and executed. The result was a tremendous fall in the grain harvest, in the production of sugar, in the number of horses, cattle, pigs and sheep.²³ The loss of life was estimated to have been in the millions.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 41-42.

²⁰Ibid., p. 36.

²¹Ibid., pp. 36-38.

²²Ibid., p. 36.

²³Ibid., p. 40.

"Caught unawares by the radicalism of its own shift of policy, the government did not and could not make even an elementary political preparation for the new course. Not only the peasant masses, but even the local organs of power, were ignorant of what was being demanded of them. The peasants were heated white hot by rumors that their cattle and property were to be seized by the state. This rumor, too, was not so far from the truth. Actually realizing their own former caricatures of the Left Opposition, the bureaucracy 'robbed the villages'. Collectivization appeared to the peasant primarily in the form of an expropriation of all his belongings. They collectivized not only horses, cows, sheep, pigs, but even new-born chickens. They 'dekulakized', as one foreign observer wrote, 'down to the felt shoes, which they dragged from the feet of little children'. As a result, there was an epidemic selling of cattle for a song by the peasants, of a slaughter of cattle for meat and hides."²⁴

The second five-year plan was also opposed by Trotsky, for reasons similar to those already indicated: he desired to improve the conditions of the workers, to obtain a more uniform output of higher quality merchandise, etc.

"There is only one way out: the inauguration of the Second Five Year plan must be put off for one year. 1933 must be made a buffer between the first Five Year Plan and the second. In the course of this period it is necessary on the one hand, to verify the inheritance left by the first Five Year Plan, to fill in the most yawning gaps, to mitigate the unbearable disproportions and to straighten out the economic front; and on the other hand, to reconstruct the Second Five Year Plan, so calculating it as to make its points of departure about flush to the actual and not imaginary results of the first Five Year Plan."²⁵

"The Left Opposition in its own time was the first to demand the inauguration of the Five Year Plan. Now it is duty bound to say: It is necessary to put off the second Five Year Plan. Away with shrieking enthusiasm! Away with stock jobbing! There is no reconciling them with planned activity. Then, you are for retreat? Yes, for a temporary retreat. . . ."²⁶

planned activity. Then, you are for retreat? Yes, for a temporary retreat. . . ."²⁶

elaborating many of the fundamentals briefly indicated above.²⁷

Status of Soviet Workers.²⁸ The Left Opposition has criticized the

²⁴Ibid., pp. 38-39.

²⁵Trotsky, Soviet Economy in Danger, p. 41.

²⁶Ibid., p. 42.

²⁷Trotsky, Problems of the Development of the U.S.S.R., passim.

²⁸Serge, Russia Twenty Years After, pp. 3-21.

entire approach to the solution of economic problems by the Stalin regime, particularly because of its failure to consider the effect of its plans upon the workers.

"The draft of the Platform of the International Left Opposition proclaims, 'The living standards of the workers and their role in the state are the highest criterions of socialist successes.' 'If the Stalinist bureaucracy had approached the tasks of planning and of the living regulation of economy from this viewpoint', we wrote more than a year ago, 'it would not have missed fire frightfully each time, it would not have been compelled to put through the policies of wasteful zig-zags, and it would not have been placed face to face with political dangers.'"²⁹

Trotsky has charged that the lack of proper planning resulted in a great food shortage which wrought great havoc among the workers, and that Pravda had approved the conduct of a woman who had undertaken to supplement her meager food allotment by raising a pig. Trotsky scored this and the sermon preached to the workers in this official press: 'Private domestic economy hitherto tied the worker to capitalism but now it attaches him to the Soviet system.' He declared:

" . . . One cannot believe one's eyes! Once upon a time we learned that private domestic economy depends upon the enslavement of the woman, the most abominable element of social slavery in general. But now it appears that 'its own private' pig attaches the proletariat to socialism. Thus the hypocritical functionaries turn cruel necessity into virtue."³⁰

The attempt on the part of the soviet officials to bolster up the productivity of labor by the Stakhanovist Movement was strongly condemned by the Left Opposition as a piece-payment, speed-up system under another name.

" . . . The Stakhanov movement to a great degree comes down to an intensification of labor, and even to a lengthening of the working day. During the so-called 'non-working' time, the Stakhanovists put their benches and tools in order and sort their raw material, the brigadiers instruct their brigades, etc. Of the seven-hour working day there thus remains nothing but the name.

"It was not the Soviet administrators who invented the secret of piece-work payment. That system, which strains the nerves without visible external compulsion, Marx considered 'the most suitable to capitalistic methods of

²⁹Trotsky, Soviet Economy in Danger, pp. 22-23.

³⁰Ibid., p. 21.

production'. The workers greeted this innovation not only without sympathy, but with hostility. It would have been unnatural to expect anything else of them. . . ."³¹

Finally, everything else aside, Trotsky has maintained that the spurring of individual workers to a higher level of output is not the basic solution to the problem.

" . . . The difficulty lies in the general organization of labor. The Soviet administrative personnel is, as a general rule, far less equal to the new productive tasks than the worker."³²

Wage Inequalities, Economic Classes.³³ Soviet officials have stated that the goal of the Soviet state is a classless society, and have maintained that they are heading toward that goal, even though, as they have confessed, "'We are still far from the complete abolition of classes . . .'"³⁴ Trotsky has emphatically denied that the Soviet Union is moving away from class inequalities; according to his version, the existence of economic classes is an ever-present reality which has shown no signs of disappearing but has tended to become more stratified every day.

"From the point of view of property in the means of production, the differences between a marshall and a servant girl, the head of a trust, and a day laborer, the son of a people's commissar and a homeless child, seems not exist at all. Nevertheless, the former occupy lordly apartments, enjoy several summer homes in various parts of the country, have the best automobiles at their disposal, and have long ago forgotten how to shine their own shoes. The latter live in wooden barracks often without partitions, lead a half-hungry existence, and do not shine their own shoes only because they go barefoot. To the bureaucrat this difference does not seem worthy of attention. To the day laborer, however, it seems, not without reason, very essential."³⁵

According to Trotsky, there are two factors which have given rise to income disparities and different economic classes: different wage levels,

³¹Trotsky, The Revolution Betrayed, p. 80.

³²Ibid., p. 83.

³³Serge, op. cit., pp. 15-20.

³⁴Trotsky, op. cit., p. 237.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 238-239.

based on productivity, and membership in the bureaucracy. As a consequence of both, skilled laborers have often earned twice as much as the unskilled laborer, and the specialist fifteen times as much.³⁶ A situation of this kind is regarded by Trotsky as a fundamental departure from the aims of a socialist society where the first concern should be with the well-being of the vast majority of the workers.

" . . . Hymns to the sacred socialist property sounder under these conditions a good deal more convincing to the manager of the Stakhanovist, than to the rank-and-file worker or collective peasant. The rank-and-file workers, however, are the overwhelming majority of society. It was they, and not the new aristocracy, that socialism had in mind."³⁷

Trotsky has enumerated the various strata of society in the U.S.S.R. which exist because the bureaucracy finds it to its advantage to effect such a result by its economic mismanagement.

" . . . The real divisions of Soviet society, which should and might easily be revealed with the help of an honest census, are as follows: heads of the bureaucracy, specialists, etc., living in bourgeois conditions; medium and lower strata, on the level of the petty bourgeoisie; worker and collective farm aristocracy -- approximately on the same level; medium working mass; medium stratum of collective farmers; individual peasants and craftsmen; lower worker and peasant strata passing over into the lumpen-proletariat; homeless children, prostitutes, etc."³⁸

Soviet Polity

¹
Soviet Foreign Policy. The Soviet foreign policy of preserving the U.S.S.R. by a series of collective security pacts and People's Front governments has already been indicated; likewise the criticism made of both by the Fourth International.²

³⁶Ibid., p. 241.

³⁷Idem.

³⁸Ibid., p. 243.

¹James, op. cit., pp. 373-404. Serge, op. cit., pp. 255-274.

²Discussed supra.

The Soviet State: Its "Withering Away". The Trotskyists have held that according to the Marxian theory of the state, from the moment the bourgeoisie are overthrown and a dictatorship of the proletariat is inaugurated, certain coercive aspects of state rule begin to die out, or wither away. This, Trotskyists have asserted, should also be true in the Soviet Union; but an examination of the Soviet structure reveals no such withering away; the powers exercised by the Soviet bureaucracy tend to show, if anything, that the powers of the state are being greatly strengthened.³

"However you may interpret the nature of the present Soviet state, one thing is indubitable: at the end of its second decade of existence, it has not only not died away, but not begun to 'die away'. Worse than that, it has grown into a hitherto unheard of apparatus of compulsion. The bureaucracy not only has not disappeared, yielding its place to the masses, but has turned into an uncontrolled force dominating the masses. The army not only has not been replaced by an armed people, but has given birth to a privileged officers' caste, crowned with marshals, while the people, 'the armed bearers of the dictatorship', are now forbidden in the Soviet Union to carry even nonexplosive weapons. With the utmost stretch of fancy it would be difficult to imagine a contrast more striking than that which exists between the scheme of the workers' state according to Marx, Engels and Lenin, and the actual state now headed by Stalin. . . ."⁴

The New Soviet Constitution.⁵ Trotsky's criticisms of the new Soviet constitution adopted in June 1936, have been many. First and foremost, he has alleged, "the most democratic in the world" was enshrouded in mystery until the Central Executive Committee of the Communist party submitted it for adoption, after which it was accepted in toto.

" . . . Neither in the press nor at any meetings was a word ever spoken about this great reform. Moreover, as early as March 1, 1936, Stalin declared to the American interviewer, Roy Howard: 'We will doubtless adopt our new constitution at the end of this year.' Thus Stalin knew with complete accuracy just when this new constitution, about which the people at that moment knew nothing at all, would be adopted. It is impossible not to

³Trotsky, op. cit., pp. 45-46.

⁴Ibid., pp. 51-52.

⁵Serge, op. cit., pp. 206-210.

conclude that 'the most democratic constitution in the world' was worked out and introduced in a not quite perfectly democratic manner. . . ."⁶

Another fundamental difficulty which Trotsky has declared hardly compatible with socialism is the substitution of "From each according to his abilities to each according to his work" for the famous Marxian slogan "From each according to his abilities to each according to his need".⁷

Commenting on this, Trotsky has declared:

"The Soviet state in all its relations is far closer to a backward capitalism than to communism. It cannot yet even think of endowing each 'according to his needs'. But for this very reason it cannot permit its citizens to work 'according to their abilities'. It finds itself obliged to keep in force the system of piecework payment, the principle of which may be expressed thus: 'Get out of everybody as much as you can, and give him in exchange as little as possible.'⁸

Another fundamental criticism made by Trotsky has been the replacement of the Soviet system of political representation with what he has regarded in essence as democratic parliamentarianism. Under the Soviet system of representation, the proletariat was definitely recognized as a separate class and was in the ascendancy; under the new constitution, classes have been abolished as such; representation is geographic, not economic. According to Trotsky, this is a premature attempt to establish the classless society, when, in reality, classes still continue to exist.

" . . . This is a matter, to put it briefly, of juridically liquidating the dictatorship of the proletariat. . . . The Soviet proletariat still exists as a class deeply distinct from the peasantry, the technical intelligentsia and the bureaucracy -- and moreover as the sole class interested right up to the end in the victory of socialism. The new constitution wants to dissolve this class in 'the nation' politically, long before it is economically dissolved in society.

" . . . Soviets in their essence are organs of class rule, and cannot be anything else. The democratically elected institutions of local self-administration are municipalities, dumas, zemstvos, anything you will, but

⁶Trotsky, op. cit., p. 257.

⁷Trotsky, op. cit., p. 258.

⁸Ibid., pp. 258-259.

not soviets. A general state Legislative Assembly on the basis of democratic formulas is a belated parliament (or rather its caricature), but by no means the highest organ of the Soviets. In trying to cover themselves with the historic authority of the Soviet system, the reformers merely show that the fundamentally new administration which they are giving to the state life dare not as yet come out under its own name."⁹

Freedom under the New Constitution. The New Constitution theoretically guarantees freedom of speech, press and assemblage, but Trotsky has held that these rights are illusory in the Soviet Union. One cannot speak, write, hold meetings not officially sanctioned without incurring the wrath of the bureaucracy. These liberties, in short, are guaranteed only to those who are orthodox in their beliefs and who continue to remain so. Any deviation from the party line carries with it serious penalties which lead to imprisonment or even death.

"To be sure, the new charter 'guarantees' to the citizens the so-called 'freedoms' of speech, press, assemblage and street processions. But each of these guarantees has the form either of a heavy muzzle or of shackles upon the hands and feet. Freedom of the press means a continuation of the fierce advance-censorship whose chains are held by the Secretariat of a Central Committee whom nobody has elected. Freedom of Byzantine flattery is thus, of course, fully 'guaranteed'. Meanwhile, the innumerable articles, speeches, and letters of Lenin, ending in his 'testament', will continue under the new constitution to be locked up merely because they rub the new leaders the wrong way. . . . 'Freedom of assemblage' will mean, as formerly, the obligation of certain groups of the population to appear at meetings summoned by the authorities for the adoption of resolutions prepared in advance. Under the new constitution as under the old, hundreds of foreign communists, trusting in the Soviet 'right of asylum', will remain in prisons and concentration camps for crimes against the dogma of infallibility. In the matter of 'freedom', everything will remain as of old. . . ."¹⁰

The One-Party System. Trotsky has contended that genuine democracy is not compatible with the Soviet elective system where only one party, the official Communist party, may legally exist. Differences in evaluating the policies to be pursued for the solution of the many problems which confront the Soviet Union would almost certainly lead to the formation of groups ex-

⁹Ibid., pp. 261-262.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 262-263.

pressing dissident viewpoints. But these cannot legally exist. Even secret ballot is a sham because voters must choose their representatives only from among those presented to them.¹¹

"The promise to give the Soviet people freedom to vote 'for those whom they want to elect' is rather a poetic figure than a political formula. The Soviet people will have the right to choose their 'representatives' only from among candidates whom the central and local leaders present to them under the flag of the party. . . . At present, when socialism has conquered 'finally and irrevocably', the formation of factions is punished with concentration camp or firing squad. The prohibition of other parties, from being a temporary evil, has been erected into a principle. . . ."12

Trotsky has rejected Stalin's explanation that since there are no classes in the Soviet Union the need for a multiplicity of parties does not exist. He has held that classes do exist in the Soviet Union, and if parties are unnecessary, Stalin's too should be liquidated.

"In making this imprudent excursion into the field of theory [i.e., no classes, no parties], Stalin proved a good deal more than he wanted to. From his reasonings it follows not only that there can be no different parties in the Soviet Union, but that there cannot even be one party. For where there are no classes, there is in general no place for politics. Nevertheless, from this law Stalin draws a 'sociological' conclusion in favor of the party of which he is the General Secretary."13

Persecution of the Opposition.¹⁴ One of Trotsky's greatest grievance has been that Stalinism has devoured all the loyal sons and daughters of the revolution who have disagreed with his conception of Marxism-Leninism. He has outlawed them, compelled all honest opposition to go underground, exiled them by the thousands, and finally, as evidenced by the Moscow trials, executed the more adamant of his opponents upon flimsy, trumped-up charges of "Trotskyism-in-the-service-of-fascism".

¹¹Ibid., p. 265.

¹²Ibid., pp. 265-266.

¹³Ibid., p. 268.

¹⁴Serge, From Lenin to Stalin, pp. 65-74; Russia Twenty Years After, pp. 59-115. The issues of Socialist Appeal have carried many articles of alleged persecution of old Bolsheviks. For a representative sampling, see Jan. 22, 1938, p. 1; April 2, 1938, p. 3; April 16, 1938, p. 1; April 30, 1938, p. 3; July 9, 1938, p. 1; July 16, 1938, p. 1; Aug. 13, 1938, p. 3; Sept. 10, 1938, p. 3.

"In their persecution of revolutionists, the Thermidorians pour out all their hatred upon those who remind them of the past, and make them dread the future. The prisons, the remote corners of Siberia and Central Asia, the fast multiplying concentration camps, contain the flower of the Bolshevik Party, the most sturdy and true. Even in the solitary confinement prisons of Siberia the Oppositionists are still persecuted with searches, postal blockades and hunger. . . .

" . . . During these years hundred of Oppositionists, both Russian and foreign, have been shot, or have died of hunger strikes, or have resorted to suicide. Within the last twelve years, the authorities have scores of times announced to the world the final rooting out of the Opposition. But during the 'purgations' in the last month of 1935 and the first half of 1936, hundreds of thousands of members of the party were again expelled, among them several tens of thousands of 'Trotskyists'. The most active were immediately arrested and thrown into prisons and concentration camps. As to the rest, Stalin, through Pravda, openly advised the local organs not to give them work. In a country where the sole employer is the state, this means death by slow starvation. . . . Exactly how many Bolsheviks have been expelled, arrested, exiled, exterminated, since 1923, when the era of Bonapartism opened, we shall find out when we go through the archives of Stalin's political police. . . ."¹⁵

Soviet-Nazi Rapprochement. On the basis of numerous rumors and reports emanating from the Kremlin (and one of its alleged unofficial reporters, Walter Duranty) the Trotskyists have predicted that Stalin will seek to come to terms with Hitler and abandon, if necessary, his old allies, France and Great Britain.¹⁶ It is on this basis that they have explained Stalin's adamant refusal to admit any German refugees into the country: Stalin has been unwilling to place any obstacles in the path of such a possible alliance.¹⁷

The Solution: A New Communist Party in the U.S.S.R.

As has been indicated, in presenting Trotsky's theory of Thermidor,¹ the ultimate solution as Trotsky has seen it, is the establishment of a

¹⁵ Trotsky, op. cit., pp. 282-283.

¹⁶ Socialist Appeal, Oct. 8, 1938, p.1; Oct. 15, 1938, p. 1; Feb. 21, 1939, p.4.

¹⁷ Socialist Appeal, Dec. 3, 1938, p. 4; March 7, 1939, p. 4.

¹ Discussed supra.

Fourth International, to replace the bankrupt Third and to carry out the task of world revolution left uncompleted by Lenin.² In the meantime, it is the duty of the Opposition within the Soviet Union to build the Russian section of the Fourth International which will play its part in the overthrow of the Stalin bureaucracy.

Defend the Soviet Union: A Workers' State!³ Despite the harsh criticisms which the Trotskyists have made of Stalin and his "bureaucracy", the Fourth Internationalists have still maintained that for all its "bureaucratic distortions" the Soviet Union is still a workers state⁴ and must be staunchly defended from the attacks of the fascists and capitalist-imperialists. The position of the Trotskyists on this point has been without equivocation, they have asserted.

"What attitude should we take towards the Soviet Union? There are those who contend that the Soviet Union should be placed in the same category as the fascist states, so that in case of an attack by the fascist countries against the Soviet Union, it would be immaterial to the working class whether the Soviet Union is defeated or not. We of the Socialist Workers' party consider such an attitude absolutely incorrect. The Russian proletarian revolution of 1917 placed political power in the hands of the workers who then proceeded to nationalize the industries. Thus far the means of production have not been returned to private ownership. It is true that the Russian workers have no economic or political democracy, but the fact remains that private ownership in the means of production has not been restored as yet, and to that extent the Soviet Union still remains a workers' state.

"As against any attack by the fascists the workers of the world should rise to defend the Soviet Union, that is, to defend the basic conquest of the proletarian revolution and not the despotic rule of Stalinism. Both the Russian workers and the workers of the rest of the world have the same tasks as far as the Soviet Union is concerned: to defend it against any attack by the capitalist states and to purge it of the Stalinist bureaucracy. In the Soviet Union, however, the workers are no longer compelled to wage a war against capitalists for the purpose of expropriating them, that is, they do not have to accomplish a social revolution. All that they have to

²Trotsky, Socialist Appeal, Nov. 20, 1937, pp. 5,7.

³Trotsky, In Defense of the Soviet Union, passim. Socialist Workers Party, op. cit., p. 25.

⁴Trotsky, "The Soviet Union Today," New International (July, 1935), Vol. II, No. 4, p. 122. Goldman, op. cit., p. 46.

do is to organize a political revolution, to throw the Stalinist bureaucracy out and establish democracy in the government and in the factory."⁵

⁵Goldman, op. cit., pp. 46-47.

CHAPTER XXXIX

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST LEAGUE - FOURTH INTERNATIONAL -- CRITICISM OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST OPPOSITION (LOVESTONE - BRANDLER GROUP)

Introduction

Trotskyists in the United States have borne a traditional hostility towards the Lovestone-Brandler Group. The Trotskyists were expelled from the American Communist party in November 1928 when the party was still under the control of the Lovestone faction; it was Lovestone and his associates who first raised the hue and cry of "Trotskyism".¹

Trotskyists on the whole have not given much space in their party press to a consideration of the principles, strategy and tactics of the Lovestone-Brandler Group. Prior to 1937, in any event, they regarded this group as an appendage to the Stalinist movement proper, sometimes calling it the tail-end of the Stalinist kite; its leaders, in the eyes of the Trotskyists always attempted to minimize their differences with the orthodox movement proper, and were hailed as "Stalin's attorneys".² From the date of their expulsion from the Communist party in 1929 until 1937, the Trotskyists have contended, the Lovestoneites left no stone unturned to get themselves reinstated into the C.P. To do this, they gave an incorrect estimate of their differences with the orthodox Communist movement: the Lovestoneites maintained (the Trotskyists have stated) until long after the adoption of the new line at the Seventh Congress of the Comintern, that their differences with the C.P. were not based on principles but on conflicting evaluations

¹Socialist Appeal, Oct. 22, 1938, p. 4.

²New Militant, Dec. 28, 1935, p. 3.

over what constituted correct tactics. The Trotskyists characterized this as a dangerously false and misleading analysis.³

Despite the alleged fundamental errors of the International Communist Opposition, Trotsky acknowledged the correctness of some of its criticisms of the policies of the Comintern, but their value was held to be circumscribed by the I.C.O.'s basic outlook.

" . . . The circumstance that in their criticism of the monkey-shines of the 'third period', the Brandlerites reiterated a number of old but correct concepts, does not at all vouch for the correctness of their general position. . . ."⁴

A correct presentation of the Trotskyists appraisal of the International Communist Opposition necessitates a three-fold chronological division: (1) from 1929 until the Seventh World Congress of the Comintern in 1935; (2) from the Seventh World Congress until the summer of 1937; (3) since the summer of 1937.

From 1929 until the Seventh World Congress of the Comintern¹

The following were the most significant aspects of the criticism made by the Trotskyists of the Lovestone-Brandler group: (1) its theory of "exceptionalism"; (2) its acceptance of the theory of socialism in one country; (3) its defense of Stalin and the Soviet Union "bureaucracy"; (4) its refusal to break with the Third International.

Theory of Exceptionalism. The major premises underlying the entire orientation of the Lovestone group from the time of its expulsion in 1929 to about 1936 was bitterly assailed by the Trotskyists. The latter completely

³New Militant, Nov. 23, 1935, p. 2; Dec. 28, 1935, p. 3.

⁴Trotsky, What Next? p. 144.

¹For a detailed polemical survey of Brandler's policies, see Trotsky, Two Letters on the Question of the German October, New International (Feb., 1938), Vol. IV, No. 2, pp. 56-58. Held, "The Course of Herr Brandler," New International (April, 1938), Vol. IV, No. 4, pp. 119-121; (May, 1938), Vol. IV, No. 5, pp. 146-149.

rejected the theory of exceptionalism by which, they inferred, the Lovestone group maintained that the tactics employed by Stalin in the Soviet Union were sound and wholesome but that the same tactics were inapplicable in other sections of the Comintern, as in Germany and the United States, where different conditions required different tactics. The roots of the problem lay deeper, the Trotskyists held; such simple explanations were at best half-truths.

" . . . The Brandlerists, in spite of their apparatus cadre, are descending step by step; small tactical recipes cannot replace a revolutionary - strategical position. . . ."2

" . . . We, Marxists, were never patrons of the double bookkeeping system of the Brandlerites according to which the policies of the Stalinists are impeccable in the U.S.S.R. but ruinous outside the boundaries of U.S.S.R. It is our conviction that they are equally ruinous in both instances. . . ."3

"Sage American Brandlerites (the Lovestone group) complicate the question; the economic policy of the Stalinists, if you please, is impeccable, but the political regime in the U.S.S.R. is bad: there is no democracy. It does not occur to these theoreticians to ask themselves why then does Stalin liquidate democracy if his economic policies are correct and successful? Isn't it out of fear that if proletarian democracy obtained, the party and the working class would express much too restlessly and violently their enthusiasm over his economic policies?"4

" . . . The characteristic feature of opportunism -- to bow before the power of the present day -- determines the whole attitude of the Brandlerites to the Stalinists: 'We are prepared to acknowledge uncritically everything you do in the U.S.S.R., permit us only to carry out our policy in our Germany.' The position of the Lovestoneites in the United States, of the Right Opposition in Czecho-Slovakia, and their related semo-social democratic, semi-Communist groups in other countries, bears a similar character."5

The Trotskyists submitted their brief to show that the problem was not merely a question of tactics; if the analysis of the Lovestoneites in the

²Trotsky, The Only Road, p. 90.

³Trotsky, The Soviet Union and the Fourth International, p. 3.

⁴Idem.

⁵Trotsky, Problems of the Development of the U.S.S.R., p. 38.

United States (and elsewhere) had been correct, and the Comintern had been suffering merely from left tactical deviations, the "line" of the Communist Party after the Seventh World Congress (1935) would never have taken such a sudden extreme right (People's Front) swerve, they argued. They therefore denied that the position of the Comintern prior to 1935 could have been accurately characterized as "ultra-leftism".

"But the Brandlerites also criticize the Comintern policies of the Stalinist bureaucracy in a manner extremely one-sided and theoretically dishonest. Its sole vice appears to be 'ultra-Leftism'. But can any one accuse Stalin's four-year bloc with Chiang Kai-Shek of being 'ultra-Left'? Can one call the creation of the Peasant International ultra-Left? Can one assign to putschism the bloc with the strikebreakers of the General Council? Or the creation of worker-peasant parties in Asia, and the Farmer-Labor Party in the United States?

"Furthermore, what is the social nature of Stalinist ultra-Leftism? What is it? A temporary mood? A fit of sickness? One seeks in vain for an answer from theoretician Thalheimer.

"Meanwhile the riddle has long been solved by the Left Opposition: the matter concerns the ultra-Left zig zag of Centrism. But precisely this definition, which has very verified by the developments of the last nine years cannot be accepted by the Brandlerites because it finishes them off too. They perpetuated with the Stalinist faction all its Right zig zags but rebelled against the Left; thereby they demonstrated that they are the Right wing of Centrism. . . ."⁶

Commenting on the change of "line" brought about by the Seventh World Congress, the New Militant reported:

"The Stalinist turn to social patriotism caught the Lovestone group unawares. Their diagnosis of what was wrong with the Comintern was that it was ultra-leftist. We, on the contrary, have always contended that the ultra-left swing of the C.I. (1928-1934) was only one side of Stalinism, that Stalinism veers right or left in obedience to the temporary requirements of the Soviet bureaucracy. . . ."⁷

Socialism in One Country. Trotsky's arguments in behalf of Permanent Revolution as opposed to Socialism in One Country have already been indicated. Because the Lovestoneites accepted Stalin's theory of socialism in one country, Trotskyists regarded this as conclusive proof that the International Communist Opposition had broken with Marxism-Leninism. For, declared the

⁶Trotsky, What Next? pp. 143-144. ("very verified" appears in original; possibly a typographical error.)

⁷New Militant, Dec. 28, 1935, p. 3.

Trotskyists, bound up with this theory were numerous errors which went to
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the very roots of the Third International and the Soviet Union.

"It is true that the Stalinist theory of 'socialism in one country' (and no other!), which became the official doctrine of the Comintern, and sharply separated the Left Opposition from both the Stalinists and Love-stoneites, was also a break with the revolutionary internationalism of Marx and Lenin. Nevertheless, the full practical consequences of this theory were not immediately apparent to even the most advanced workers. For many years it seemed to them a highly abstract issue. It took ten years of defeats and downsliding under Stalin's leadership, culminating in the German catastrophe, before the revolutionary faction of the Comintern could announce the death of the Comintern as a revolutionary instrument, and the necessity of building a new International."⁹

Defense of Stalinism and the Soviet Union Bureaucracy. Trotskyists strongly condemned what they considered the criticize-the-tactics-but-defend-the-theory attitude of the International Communist Opposition. Despite "disagreements with Stalin", alleged the Trotskyists, at every show-down the International Communist Opposition gave Stalin a vote of confidence and support.

"In the Russian question, as well as in all others, the international Right wing leads a parasitic existence, by nourishing itself chiefly upon the criticism of the practical and secondary mistakes of the Comintern, whose opportunist policy it approves in the fundamental questions. The unprincipledness of the Brandlerites shows itself most nakedly and cynically in the questions which are bound up with the fate of the U.S.S.R. In the period of the government's betting on the kulaks the Brandlerites completely supported the official course and demonstrated that no policy other than that of Stalin-Rykov-Bucharin could be carried out. After the turn of 1928, the Brandlerites were reduced to an expectant silence. When the successes of the industrialization, unexpected by them, showed themselves, the Brandlerites uncritically adopted the program of the 'Five Year Plan in four years' and the 'liquidation of the kulak as a class'. The Right wingers demonstrated their complete inability for a revolutionary orientation and Marxian foresight, coming forward at the same time as the advocates of the Stalinist regime in the U.S.S.R. . . ."¹⁰

The International Communist Opposition's defense of the Soviet bureaucracy took many forms, it was stated. The leaders condoned the bureaucratic

⁸Schachtman, Ten Years, pp. 77-78.

⁹New Militant, Dec. 28, 1935, p. 3.

¹⁰Trotsky, Problems of the Development of the U.S.S.R., pp. 37-38.

nature of the Stalin regime by deprecating the capacities of the rank-and-file; they attempted to discredit Trotsky's criticisms of the ruling caste by making such criticism synonymous with attacks upon the Soviet Union.

"The Right camp-followers of Centristism, the Brandlerites, try to justify the strangulation of the party by the Stalinist bureaucracy by appealing to the 'lack of culture' of the working masses, which does not at all prevent them, at the same time, from awarding the Russian proletariat the odious monopoly in the construction of socialism in one country."¹¹

" . . . Who would have dared, prior to October or in the first years after the revolution, to refer to the 'backwardness' of the Russian proletariat in defense of bureaucratism in the party!"¹²

August Thalheimer, leading member of the International Communist Opposition, attacked Trotsky for doubting " . . . the proletarian character of the Soviet state and the socialist character of the economic construction".¹³ To this charge Trotsky replied in this manner:

" . . . Thereby Thalheimer only demonstrates the extent to which he identifies the workers' government with the Soviet bureaucracy. He demands the Soviet Union be regarded not through the eyes of the international proletariat but nowise other than through the spectacles of the Stalinist faction. In other words, he reasons not as a theoretician of the proletarian revolution but as a flunkey of the Stalinist bureaucracy. Insulted and disgraced, but a flunkey just the same, who awaits forgiveness. . . ."¹⁴

Defense of Third International. The stalwart support of the Third International by the International Communist Opposition also drew heavy fire from the Trotskyists, whose indictment of the Third International as a rubber stamp for Stalinism has already been indicated. Trotsky charged that the defense of the Third International by calling its catastrophic failures "honest mistakes" again proceeded from the desires of the Lovestone-Brandler group to minimize its differences and regain admittance into the Communist International. These "honest mistakes", in the eyes of the Trotskyists,

¹¹Trotsky, op. cit., p. 17.

¹²Ibid., p. 18.

¹³Trotsky, What Next? p. 138.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 138-139.

proceeded from corrupting the principles of Marxism-Leninism, and not from mere deviation in tactical matters.

Commenting on the statement of Bertram Wolfe, a leading Lovestoneite, ("The Comintern must hasten to clean house."), the Trotskyists went on to declare:

"'The Comintern must clean house' -- what a fantastic joke! Real revolutionists will no more ask the degenerate Third International to clean house than they will ask the degenerate Second International to clean house. Both are equally incapable."¹⁵

From the Seventh World Congress to the Summer of 1937

The drastic change in the Comintern's policy after the Seventh World Congress found a bewildered Lovestone-Brandler group, the Trotskyists alleged. The adoption of the People's Front policies no longer made it possible for the latter to speak of mere tactical differences; actually principled differences now existed. But the prospects of reconciliation of the International Communist Opposition with the Comintern loomed large. The result, according to the Trotskyists, was an obvious floundering in regard to the policies to be adopted, and the exertion of strenuous efforts to minimize existing differences with the Comintern.

"The official blessing given to social-patriotism by the Seventh Congress confronted the Lovestone group with an inescapable decision. The Seventh Congress was not merely another incident. They had to choose: Either break with the social-patriotic Comintern or capitulate to it. Capitulation meant, this time, capitulation on fundamental principles with no nonsense about 'disagreeing but continuing our work for unity'. . . .

"This all-important question produced a crisis in the Lovestone group. . . . For a few weeks, they teetered back and forth on the edge of breaking with Stalinism. In those few weeks, they clearly indicated what the issue was. Then -- they turned back and, ever since, as we shall show, they demonstrated that to remain a 'loyal opposition' after the Seventh Congress requires an entirely new level of subservience to Stalinism; requires, in fact, nothing less than a whitewash of social-patriotism and to play the role of Stalinist agents for organic unity. . . ."¹

¹⁵New Militant, Nov. 23, 1935, p. 2.

¹New Militant, Dec. 28, 1935, p. 3.

An example of what the Trotskyists regarded as pussyfooting by the Lovestone group was its early effort to "whitewash the Stalinist War Program". Instead of denouncing the war position of the Comintern as an out-and-out betrayal of Marxism-Leninism, Lovestone was charged with formulating the theory of "mixed wars" which, to the Trotskyists, was a back-handed way of justifying Stalinism.

". . . Lovestone developed the theory that the 'sole' deviation of the C.I. was on the question of 'mixed wars', i.e., wars in which the Soviet Union was involved on one side, and that even this deviation arose from the laudable desire to protect the Soviet Union. Since 'mixed wars' are the only kind of large-scale wars which are possible in a period in which all wars tend to be international in scope, and since Social Democrats support capitalist governments from the equally laudable desire to protect the working class organizations against the foreign enemy, Lovestone's arguments do not hold water for a moment. . . ."²

From this and many other instances, the Trotskyists charged, the Lovestone group indicated that it was prepared to go to any lengths to attain unity with the Comintern. They therefore concluded:

"The Lovestoneites are Stalinist Agents, to be treated with the same contempt and to be fought as intransigently, as Stalinism itself."³

Since 1937¹

After 1937, when the Lovestoneites declared they made their irrevocable break with Stalin and the Third International, the Trotskyists regarded this as final evidence of the soundness of their own basic analyses and premises.

"We thus see that the Lovestoneite fundamental theories, analysis, logic and conclusions on this basic question have been refuted by history itself, as inadvertantly admitted by the Lovestoneites themselves.

"What remains? Bewilderment, spiced with critical bits taken from Trotskyism; apologies for their old position, and a utopian conception that although in Russia 'There can be no hope for any kind of democratic rights either inside or outside the party' the removal of Stalin (that is,

²New Militant, Nov. 23, 1935, p. 2.

³New Militant, Dec. 28, 1935, p. 3.

¹"Lovestone's Travels," Socialist Appeal, July 2, 1938, p. 4.

the overthrow of the bureaucracy) 'can take place thru the channel of evolution' (ICO resolution, June 25).

And with this eclectic program the International of Lovestone-Thalheimer-Brockway-Gorkin is to be organized!"²

Reversal on Moscow Trials. The change in attitude of the Lovestoneites on the question of Trotsky's guilt in the Moscow Trials has already been noted.³ Trotsky himself answered Bertram Wolfe's review of "The Case of Leon Trotsky" which appeared in the New Republic of November 24, 1937. In that review Wolfe had declared that he had been convinced by the book that Trotsky had not been guilty of the charges preferred against him by the Soviet government; that his former evaluation had been unsound.

" . . . A Marxist who openly declares that the Moscow trials were an enigma to him until the appearance of the report of the Coyoacan hearing thereby admits that he has not understood the most important events and processes of contemporary history."⁴

"Bertram Wolfe saw a little piece of truth but, as has been said already, he saw it from a formally judicial and individually psychological point of view. That shows that he belongs to that generation of Marxists which is deft in organizational maneuvers and chess moves but completely unlearned in a Marxist approach to great problems. We value the sincerity of the acknowledgement of Wolfe and we say this without the least irony. But it is exactly because of this that we advise Wolfe to throw off the petty consideration of clannishness, to approach the problem without that cynicism which characterizes Brandler-Lovestone, to study anew the problem of the Soviet revolution and to re-examine his position from beginning to end. Otherwise Wolfe will, with a delay of some years, have to make new discoveries. And time, meanwhile, does not wait. The problems are big. Important work is to be done."⁵

Although significant differences no longer seem to exist on such fundamentals of Marxism as the war question and the People's Front, there are still some criticisms which the Socialist Workers party has made of the Lovestoneites: their affiliation to the London Bureau; their support of the P.O.U.M. in Spain; their affiliation to the Keep America Out of War Committee.

²Carter, "Lovestoneites Change 'Line' Under Impact of Recent Events in U.S.S.R.," Socialist Appeal, Dec. 11, 1937, p. 6.

³Discussed supra.

⁴Trotsky, "Bertram Wolfe on the Moscow Trials," Socialist Appeal, Dec. 4, 1937, p. 5.

⁵Idem.

The London Bureau.⁶ The general criticism of the London Bureau, to which the Lovestoneites are affiliated, has been that its program is one of vacillating centrism and not revolutionary Marxism.

Keep America Out of War Committee.⁷ A similar criticism has been made of the K.A.O.W. Committee: The program of this organization is not based upon revolutionary Marxism; no effort has been made to link war and the class struggle, hence it cannot be effective in its proposals.

The P.O.U.M.⁸ The program of the P.O.U.M. which the Lovestoneites supported in the Spanish Civil War was admitted by the Trotskyists to be sound in its fundamental features.⁹ The criticisms made, however, were these: The P.O.U.M. entered the People's Front government in Catalonia in 1936; the following year it abandoned the workers on the barricades in Barcelona when the masses showed a revolutionary upsurge and a will to smash the Stalinist counter-revolution.¹⁰

⁶Socialist Workers Party, op. cit., p. 14. Carter, "A Meeting of Bankrupts," New International (May, 1938), Vol. IV, No. 5, pp. 139-141. Trotsky, "The International Association of Squeezed Lemons (No. 3 $\frac{1}{2}$)," New International (Dec., 1938), Vol. IV, No. 12, pp. 364-365.

⁷Carter, op. cit., p. 140.

⁸Trotsky, "The Lesson of Spain--The Last Warning," Socialist Appeal, Jan. 15, 1938, pp. 4-5.

⁹Morrow, Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Spain, p. 72.

¹⁰Morrow, op. cit., p. 54; "The War in Spain," New International (Feb., 1938), Vol. IV, No. 2, p. 60.

CHAPTER XL

THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY -- CRITICISM OF OTHER MARXIAN POLITICAL MOVEMENTS

Second (Socialist) International

The Trotskyists have continued to evaluate the Second Socialist International in terms almost identical with those first enunciated by the Bolsheviks during the formative period of the Third International. They have alleged that the Second Socialist International has thoroughly discredited itself prior to, during, and since the World War.

Prior to 1914, its parties had already abandoned revolutionary Marxism, in favor of class-collaboration and "participation in bourgeois coalition governments", the S.W.P. has alleged.¹ During the war, it very quickly came to the aid and rescue of its bourgeois-capitalist governments ("support the fatherland") by defending their war aims and imperialist objectives and by whipping the working class into line to do likewise.²

Since the World War, the Trotskyists have again charged, the Second International has pursued similar policies, destructive of militant, revolutionary working class action. The vacillations of the German and Austrian Social Democracies most effectively helped bring on workers' defeat and fascism.³ For a time it appeared to Trotskyists as though this International could be reformed (the "French turn"), but its recent policies have been

¹Socialist Workers Party, Declaration of Principles and Constitution, pp. 11-12.

²Schachtman, "The Second International in the War," New International (Aug., 1934), Vol. I, No. 2, pp. 43-47.

³James, World Revolution, 1917-1936, pp. 97-107. Socialist Workers Party, op. cit., p. 12.

declared to be identical with those it formerly espoused.

" . . . At the present time, the most important remaining parties of the Second International (Great Britain, France) have already proclaimed their social-patriotism in the coming war, have voted for the imperialist armament budgets, and are making ready once again to lead the masses to slaughter for the cause of 'democratic imperialism'; . . ."⁴

Socialist Party, U.S.A.

Left Turn -- 1934. The rise of the Militant movement in the Socialist party, culminating in the Declaration of Principles (Detroit Convention, 1934)¹ and the Cleveland Convention (1936)² marked a distinct leftward trend in the party, away from the fundamental policies of the Second International in the direction of a more vigorous, revolutionary socialism. The Trotskyists criticized many of the alleged "centrist" tendencies which expressed themselves after Detroit³ and Cleveland.⁴ But because of basic agreement upon the war question, they finally liquidated their own organization early in 1936 and joined with the S.P. to build a revolutionary Marxist party in the United States.

The Trotskyists have maintained that the S.P. reached its peak of post-war development during those months when they were members of the party. They have attributed their expulsion (1937) to the machinations of the alleged bureaucracy of the party whose vested interests and leadership were threatened by the vigorous policies of the Trotskyists.⁵

⁴Socialist Workers Party, op. cit., p. 12.

¹Schachtman, "What Next in the Socialist Party," New International (Nov., 1934), Vol. I, No. 4, pp. 98-100.

²New Militant, May 30, 1936, pp. 1,3,4.

³Schachtman, "Right Fact in the Socialist Party," New International (Dec., 1934), Vol. I, No. 5, pp. 131-134. New Militant, Aug. 10, 1935, p. 3; Oct. 12, 1935, pp. 1,2; Oct. 26, 1935, p. 3; March 14, 1936, p. 3.

⁴For example, Socialist Appeal, Dec. 15, 1936, pp. 1-6; March 1937, pp. 29-36.

⁵Socialist Workers Party, op. cit., p. 16. Goldman, What Is Socialism? p. 38. Socialist Appeal, Aug. 14, 1937, passim.

Since 1937. The Trotskyists have alleged that since their expulsion from the S.P. all revolutionary elements have withdrawn from the party, with perhaps a few exceptions; that the party is dead and nothing is left but a right and centrist leadership without any rank-and-file following. It has characterized the S.P. as "a head without a body".⁶

" . . . The American Socialist Party has succumbed to a malignant malady known as centrism. The progressive development of the party signalized by the victory over the ossified Old Guard at the Detroit convention in 1934 and confirmed two years later at Cleveland, when the Old Guard finally split away, was abruptly arrested a few months after the Chicago convention last year. Terrified by their own verbal audacity, the party centrists made common cause with the right wing of Thomas-Hoan-Laidler. They launched a red-baiting expulsion campaign against the 'Trotskyists' as a prerequisite -- we quote one of the expulsionists -- to putting the party on the auction block in the New York municipal elections where it was sold, without bids, to the LaGuardia combination, amid the applause of the Stalinists.

"The mass expulsion of the left wing, carried out in as brutally bureaucratic a manner as ever under that Stalinist regime for which Thomas, Tyler and Co. profess such a virgin abhorrence, ripped the revolutionary heart out of the Socialist party. Whole state and local organizations of the party disappeared from the roster; the decisive majority of the youth organization came over to the Fourth International, leaving the old party with an all but empty shell; large numbers of members, in addition, dropped out of the party, disgusted and disillusioned by the turn in policy and regime of the official leadership."⁷

"But here lies the tragedy of the present-day Socialist Party. It has neither the revolutionary intransigence and principle of a Marxist sect without masses, nor the masses of a large and growing reformist party without revolutionary principle. It is a centrist propaganda group, with the weight of political emphasis placed at the right. . . ."⁸

Finally, the Trotskyists have charged, the last steps marking the decadence and degeneration of the S.P. were taken when it negotiated to effect re-unification with the Old Guard,⁹ and its preparation for the party's liquidation into the American Labor party.¹⁰ The S.W.P. has thus held that

⁶Schachtman, "A Head Without a Body," New International (June, 1938), Vol. IV, No. 6, p. 175.

⁷Ibid., p. 175.

⁸Ibid., pp. 175-176.

⁹Socialist Appeal, Aug. 6, 1938, p. 4; Nov. 5, 1938, p. 4; Jan. 7, 1939, p. 4; Jan. 28, 1939, p. 4; Feb. 21, 1939, p. 3.

¹⁰Socialist Appeal, March 12, 1938, p. 1; Dec. 10, 1938, p. 3; Jan. 7, 1939, p. 4.

as a force for revolutionary socialism in the United States the Socialist party is completely out of the picture.

"The Socialist Party is finished. This can hardly any longer be a matter of dispute for either its friends or its foes. The problem now, in the minds of the most vigorous of its N.E.C. members, is only how most quickly and mercifully to get the job done with."¹

The Splinter Movements

Save for sharp polemical notes which have appeared in the Trotskyist¹ press at infrequent intervals, the Trotskyists have made no detailed explanations of their points of difference with the many smaller movements formerly adhering to Trotsky and the Fourth International.

Max Schachtman, editor of the New International, has made a brief survey of these many movements, but has intimated that they should not be taken seriously.²

He has indicated that " . . . in virtually every case, those who split away proclaimed themselves the only 'genuine Trotskyists' and unlike us, whom they doomed to disintegration, the possessors of sure-fire recipes for 'mass activity'."³

After giving his version of their essential characteristics, he has dubbed them a " . . . ludicrous picture of sterility and futility to which ultra-leftist sectarianism condemns itself. . . ."⁴

¹Socialist Appeal, Nov. 5, 1938, p. 4.

¹For example, New Militant, June 6, 1936, p. 2.

²Schachtman, "Footnotes for Historians," New International (Dec., 1938), Vol. IV, No. 12, pp. 377-379.

³Ibid., p. 377.

⁴Ibid., p. 379.

PART VII

OTHER MARXIAN MOVEMENTS

CHAPTER XLI

THE SPLINTER MOVEMENTS

Introduction

In addition to the Marxian movements discussed in the foregoing pages, there remain for brief consideration a number of lesser-known groups. Some have been organized by former adherents to the official Trotskyist and other movements, and have been known as the "splinter" groups. Others have professedly derived their perspective directly from Marx; these will be considered under a "miscellaneous" heading.

One who has made only a casual survey of the prolific literature printed (and mimeographed) by the "splinter" movements must have noted that they continuously carry on a lively battle with each other over differences which loom large to them, although Marxists not associated with their movements have characterized their polemics as extremely sectarian and fruitless.

The following are among the many problems which have given rise to acute differences: the political character of the Soviet state under its present leadership; the alleged errors of the Trotskyists; the Spanish Civil War and the causes of the Loyalist defeat; correct strategy and tactics for the American scene, etc.

It is no exaggeration to say that another volume, equally ponderous, can be written to describe their positions on these and other questions, and to give an adequate account of the polemics in which they have engaged. Readers who are interested in these problems should consult complete files of the newspapers and magazines mentioned in connection with each of the movements discussed.

Communist League of Struggle

History. The Communist League of Struggle was organized by Albert Weisbord and Vera Buch in 1931. Both have a record of political and trade union activity going back many years. Weisbord joined the Socialist movement in 1919, headed the Young People's Socialist League for a time, and also became a member of the National Executive Committee of the Socialist party. In 1924 he joined the Communist party where he was active as a trade union leader. He organized the National Textile Workers Union and gave active leadership and direction to the Passaic, New Bedford, Paterson and Gastonia strikes of the middle twenties. Vera Buch has a similar history of political and trade union activity going back to membership in the Communist party in 1919.¹

In 1931, following a struggle with the Communist party leadership headed by Foster, whose policies Weisbord declared to be opportunistic and no better than those of the supplanted leader, Lovestone, both Weisbord and Buch were expelled from the Communist party.² They subsequently formed the Communist League of Struggle which for a time was affiliated to the International Left Opposition, the Trotskyist organization.³

From 1931 to 1934, the Communist League of Struggle closely supported the position taken by Trotsky on the Second International, the Third International, Stalin and the Soviet Union, and the need for a Fourth International.⁴ It strongly condemned the policies adopted by the Sixth World

¹Class Struggle (January 1936), Vol. VI, No. 1, p. 32.

²Weisbord, "My Expulsion from the Communist Party," Class Struggle (Aug.-Sept., 1931), Vol. I, No. 3, p. 3; The Conquest of Power, Vol. II, p.1116n.

³Idem.

⁴Buch, What is "Trotskyism"?--Principles of the Left Opposition. Weisbord, For a New Communist International. Communist League of Struggle, The Struggle for Communism -- The Position of the Internationalist-Communists of the United States.

Congress of the Comintern (1928) which led to such doctrines as social-fascism, dual unionism, the united-front-from-below. It condemned the attempts to substitute socialism in one country for the theory of permanent revolution.⁵ It echoed Trotsky's attacks, with some disagreements, upon the Stalin bureaucracy and the fallacious doctrines which were spelling the doom of revolutionary Marxism.⁶ (After the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International it denounced, along with the Trotskyists, the People's Front--Democracy versus Fascism orientation, with all its implications, as a serious departure from the fundamentals of Marxism Leninism.⁷)

Differences with the Communist League of America (Socialist Workers Party).⁸ In March, 1934, the Communist League of Struggle issued a polemical statement setting forth its differences with the Communist League of America (the Cannon-Schachtman group adhering to Trotsky, which subsequently became the Socialist Workers Party).⁹ The former listed fourteen points of difference, of varying degrees of importance, including such matters as: failure of the C.L.A. to evaluate the New Deal correctly; lack of ability to apply correctly the principles of the Left Opposition to the American scene; failure to advocate direct action by unemployed workers; rejection of

⁵Idem.

⁶Class Struggle (Feb., 1936), Vol. VI, No. 2, pp. 1-11. Weisbord, For A New Communist International, pp. 4-5. Communist League of Struggle, The Struggle for Communism, pp. 31-34.

⁷Class Struggle (Oct., 1935), Vol. V, Nos. 9-10, pp. 6-11; Feb., 1937, Vol. VII, No. 2, pp. 16-21.

⁸For differences between Weisbord and the Cannon-Schachtman group see Class Struggle (Feb., 1934), Vol. IV, No. 2, pp. 16-18; (June-July, 1934), Vol. IV, Nos. 6-7, pp. 2-3; (Jan., 1935), Vol. V, No. 1, pp. 29-34; (Feb., 1935), Vol. V, No. 2, pp. 31-36; (June, 1935), Vol. V, No. 6, pp. 14-17; (Aug., 1935), Vol. V, Nos. 7-8, pp. 16-22. Communist League of Struggle, The Struggle for Communism, pp. 48-50.

⁹Communist League of Struggle, Our Differences with the Communist League of America. (Internal Bulletin, March, 1934.)

self-determinism in the Black Belt; sectarianism in mass work and trade union tactics; adherence to legality; rampant factionalism.¹⁰

In November, 1934, after Trotsky had urged the French Trotskyists to join the Socialist Party ("the French turn"), the Communist League of Struggle found it necessary to break with Trotsky. The latter was severely taken to task for ordering Trotskyists to join the ranks of the Second International whose bankruptcy Trotsky himself had condemned time and again. In short, Trotsky was accused of capitulating to reformism and was declared incapable of giving proper direction and capable leadership to the forces working for the formation of a Fourth International.¹¹

Aside from the question of direction action, which the Communist League of America utterly rejected, important differences between the two groups in respect to the American scene should be noted: (1) Weisbord's analysis on the Negro question embraced self-determinism in the Black Belt, in identical terms with the Communist party; this was regarded as unsound and was rejected by the Cannon-Schachtman group.¹² (2) The Communist League of Struggle opposed all overtures towards the formation of a Labor or Farmer-Labor party,¹³ contrary to the position adopted by the Socialist Workers Party in 1938. In this connection Weisbord declared:

" . . . Everything must be done to stimulate the tendency to direct action, the willingness of the American to take matters directly into his own hands and to solve problems in the open. Precisely at this time would it be incorrect to develop parliamentary illusions concerning the formation of a Farmer-Labor Party in order to tear the workers from the bourgeoisie and to place them on the road to the struggle for power. It is not via parliamentary action and electioneering that the struggle for power will take place in this country. Contrary to the propaganda spread by the liberals,

¹⁰Idem.

¹¹Weisbord, "We Break with Trotsky," Class Struggle (November, 1934), Vol. IV, No. 11, pp. 1-7.

¹²Ibid., pp. 7-11. Weisbord, The Conquest of Power, Vol. II, pp. 1168-1170. Griffin, "Self-Determination and the Negro Masses," Class Struggle (Jan., 1935), Vol. V, No. 1, pp. 9-11.

¹³Class Struggle (Feb., 1936), Vol. VI, No. 2, pp. 16-23.

the socialists, and the Stalinists, there is little tradition of parliamentarism among the mass of proletarians in America. In fact, the best way to place the workers under the control of the capitalists would be to place their activities on a parliamentary basis. This does not mean, of course, that Communists, under certain circumstances, cannot engage in election campaigns, but the relative insignificance of these campaigns must be set forth clearly in the present transitional period."¹⁴

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Conception of Direction Action. In his conception of direct action, Weisbord has most sharply differentiated his tactics from those of other Fourth Internationalist groups which stem from Trotsky, as well as from the Communist and Socialist movements generally. He has argued that the days of rational discussions of remedies for unemployment, hunger and fascism are over. Action is necessary to crush the incipient fascist movements; to provide the needy with food, shelter and clothing; to secure the realization of workers' demands in industry. Workers must therefore be organized to defy their employers in a general strike; to seize warehouses with food and clothing; to boycott products of offending capitalists. Such economic action is pregnant with political implications, he has contended, and, properly directed, can be transformed into a struggle for the overthrow of American capitalism. He has scoffed at those who call this proposal "adventuristic" in its nature.¹⁶

"If the present epoch is one of direct action, it is another sign that the revolutionary movement must shift farther from the idea that the gyration of the representative or of the delegate can be substituted for the action of the mass itself. Direct action places before every participant the full consequences of his activity. He himself must fight out all the doubtful questions that besiege him before entering into the battle. In representative action, the masses remain passive; the field is open for bureaucracy. In direct action the masses themselves live; the representative is merely the leader, and that leader is best who knows how to train others for leadership. In a period of direct action, the units of the revolutionary party must be small, and each member must be capable of

¹⁴ Weisbord, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 1171-1172.

¹⁵ Weisbord, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 1138-1140, 1172-1175. Class Struggle, March, 1934 (Internal Bulletin), pp. 6-7. Class Struggle (Nov., 1936), Vol. VI, No. 7, pp. 1-9.

¹⁶ Idem.

standing on his own feet. Responsibility and capability become tested and developed."¹⁷

"In the unemployed field the genuine revolutionary communists will tend to make the unemployed organization rely entirely upon direct action to improve conditions. Adequate unemployment insurance is impossible today, when the armies of unemployed are so enormous. The unemployed, therefore, must be taught to help themselves. Communists and unemployed will not spend much time in legislatures, petitioning, but rather will mobilize their forces in militant demonstrations and will concentrate their attention on the places where food is stored, where fuel and clothing may be obtained. Whole neighborhoods can be aroused over the question of evictions in order to make every eviction as costly as possible for the landlords. The general idea is that the wealthy must find it more costly to make conditions worse than to maintain them as they are.

"Today, direct action can be not only a weapon to remedy conditions but a preventive force. The proletariat, knowing the menace of fascism, physically can annihilate the fascist movement at the very start. After all, in some countries the organized labor movement is well entrenched. If it knows that the days of liberalism are numbered and must give way to fascist violence, then it will be forewarned enough to make it impossible for the fascist forces to appear in workers' quarters.

"The strategy of the communists in this period must be to make the demonstrations as brutal and as powerful as possible. In every case where the workers have been defeated, sentimentality and liberal illusions have played far too great a part. The more firm and positive the action, the better the demonstration.

"In the United States, the question of the fight against lynchings of the Negro, the labor organizer, and the poor white toiler, furnishes a good illustration of the correct method. The communist will not bewail the institution of lynching, but will try to use that institution against the instigators of lynching. The slogan 'Lynch the lynchers of the Negroes and poor toilers' will mark the adoption of American methods to terminate the slaughter of innocent workers. As part of this policy, everywhere the Negroes should be induced to organize white and black physical defense bodies to protect the poor masses and to build up the power of the lowest strata of the population.

"Direct action logically leads to insurrection. The strike, the boycott, the demonstration, all have this as their ultimate objective and goal."¹⁸

Weisbord has raised many additional points involving principles, strategy and tactics which cannot be dealt with here. The reader is referred to the monthly periodical of the C.L.S., the Class Struggle, and to Weisbord's magnum opus, The Conquest of Power, for a more adequate presentation of these viewpoints.

¹⁷Weisbord, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 1139.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 1140.

League for a Revolutionary Workers Party

History.¹ The L.R.W.P. was founded in 1934 by B.J. Field after his expulsion from the Communist League of America, the official Trotskyist movement in the United States, on charges of "treachery" during a hotel strike.² Field has alleged that the expulsion was a frame-up to rid the organization of his presence because of his political differences with the Cannon-Schachtman leadership.³

Principles.⁴ Like the official Trotskyist movement, the L.R.W.P.⁵ has favored the formation of a Fourth International. However, it has differed with the Trotskyists on numerous matters, the basis of which has been its allegation that the Trotskyists have moved away from revolutionary Marxism towards centrism, as manifested by the "French turn" and their endorsement of the Labor party.

The League for a Revolutionary Workers Party has two official publications, Labor Front, a monthly newspaper, and New International Bulletin, a monthly magazine concerned with theoretical Marxian problems. For detailed criticisms of the Socialist, Communist, Lovestone, Trotskyist, and the splinter movements, the reader is urged to consult these publications.

¹National Bureau, League for a Revolutionary Workers Party, "Sectarianism, Centrism and Trotsky," New International Bulletin (Jan., 1936), Vol. I, No. 3, pp. 33-37.

²New Militant, June 6, 1936, p. 2.

³National Bureau, League for a Revolutionary Workers Party, op. cit., p. 36.

⁴Field, Prospects of American Capitalism, passim. Martin, War and How to Fight It, passim. Krehm, Spain: Revolution and Counter-Revolution, passim.

⁵Labor Front, April, 1936, p. 4. League for a Revolutionary Workers Party, "Toward the Fourth International," New International Bulletin (May, 1936), Vol. I, No. 4, pp. 1-9.

Revolutionary Workers League

History. The Revolutionary Workers League is an offshoot of the Trotskyist movement. In 1935 its followers were members of the Workers Party, the official Trotskyist party in the United States. Tom Stamm and Hugo Oehler led the revolt of the Left Wing against the proposal to follow the "French turn" and join the Socialist party. In an internal bulletin issued by them, they denounced the Cannon-Schachtman-Muste leadership which urged liquidation of the Workers Party into the American Socialist party.¹ Failing to stem the tide, Stamm and Oehler broke with the Workers party and organized the Revolutionary Workers League towards the end of 1935.²

In 1938, differences arose between the followers of Oehler and Stamm on technical aspects of the nature of Trotskyism, and kindred questions. Stamm was expelled for refusal to abide by party discipline.³

"Stamm's petty bourgeois concept on democratic centralism -- that you can violate any decision you consider bureaucratic or any position you disagree with -- is the result of his ultra-left and false evaluation of Marxism, documents already presented in the Fourth International. He has shown a consistent mechanical thinking in this period, ranging from his proposal for support of the POUM to the giving up of the sit-down tactic."⁴

To these charges, Stamm replied in the following manner:

"A final break was made with the group around Oehler, which is an impediment to serious revolutionary work because of its defeatism. Demoralized by the working class defeats in Europe and the lack of rapid progress in conquering influence and positions in the American mass movement, this group has revealed a tendency to seek a quick solution of the problem of overcoming its isolation by liquidating Marxism and conciliating with opportunism. It

¹Left Wing, Workers Party, U.S.A., International News (November, 1935), Vol. I, No. 8, pp. 1-4. Fighting Worker, March 1, 1936, pp. 1,3; May 1, 1936, p.2.

²Oehler, "Three Years of the R.W.L.," Fighting Worker, Dec. 1, 1938, p. 1.

³Fighting Worker, April 1, 1938, p. 2. Fourth International (Sept.-Oct., 1938), Vol. IV, No. 1, pp. 6, 16.

⁴Fighting Worker, loc. cit.

revealed that it had not broken with Trotskyism by projecting a number of characteristic conceptions, by which it established a basis for possible reconciliation with it. In the realm of party organization it projected in theory and in action the bureaucratic principle of an unrestricted clique leadership and a submissive membership."⁵

Stamm expressed his reluctance to relinquish the name Revolutionary Workers League because of his alleged adherence to the original program of the League's, and Oehler's abandonment of it.⁶ As a practical consequence, both the Oehlerites and the Stammites have called themselves the Revolutionary Workers League. Oehler's followers have published the Fighting Worker and the Fourth International as their official organs; the Stamm group has published Revolt.

For obvious reasons, this writer cannot pass upon the merits of this factional struggle. But despite the serious differences alleged to exist by both groups, there is still a large residue of identity which will be briefly presented.

Criticism of other Political Movements. The Revolutionary Workers League has been most sweeping in its condemnation of the Second and Third Internationals. The Socialist party, representing the former, has been regarded as "reformist" and the "left wing party of 'democratic' capitalism".⁷ The Communist party's position was analyzed and evaluated in terms similar to those employed by Trotsky. "Stalinists are not Marxists," is the sum and substance of its contentions.⁸ The People's Front, the Moscow Trials, trade union opportunism -- all have been strongly attacked.⁹

⁵Revolt, (May 7, 1938), Vol. I, No. 4, p. 16.

⁶Idem.

⁷Fighting Worker, Nov. 1, 1936, p. 2.

⁸Revolt (July 16, 1938), Vol. I, No. 8, p. 3.

⁹Fighting Worker, April 1, 1938, pp. 1, 3. Revolutionary Workers League, Stalin's Constitution -- Step Toward Capitalism! Revolt (June 25, 1938), Vol. I, No. 7, pp. 14-16; (July 16, 1938), Vol. I, No. 8, p. 3; (Oct. 29, 1938), Vol. I, No. 11, p. 24.

The Lovestone movement (Independent Labor League of America) has also come in for a goodly share of sharp criticism. Fundamentally, the RWL has argued, the Lovestoneites are one with the Stalinists: both favor socialism in one country; both play a reformist role in the trade unions and in supporting a Labor party.¹⁰

Criticism of Socialist Workers Party. By far, the strongest shafts of the Revolutionary Workers League have been directed against the S.W.P. The "French turn" by which Trotsky's followers joined the Second International in France and the United States, for example, was held to be the essence of opportunism and centrism.¹¹ The further support of the Labor party by the Socialist Workers party was held to be another evidence of its degeneration and abandonment of revolutionary Marxism.¹²

This sharp criticism of Trotsky's orthodox followers in the United States should not obscure some of the basic elements of agreement between the SWP and the RWL. Both have accepted the thesis of permanent (continuous) revolution as opposed to Stalin's thesis of socialism in one country; both have rejected popular frontism; both have refused to support the policies of the Spanish Loyalist government and also those of the POUM;¹³ both have regarded collective security as the road to war, not peace.

The Fourth International. Both factions of the Revolutionary Workers League have insisted that only a return to a more vigorous pursuit of the fundamentals of Leninism (revolutionary Marxism, opposition to centrist

¹⁰ Fighting Worker, April 1, 1938, p. 3. Fourth International (Aug., 1938), Vol. III, No. 12, pp. 19-20. Revolt, (April 9, 1938), Vol. I, No. 2, pp. 12-13; (June 4, 1938), Vol. I, No. 6, pp. 11-13.

¹¹ Fighting Worker, April 1, 1938, p. 3. Fourth International (Aug., 1938), Vol. III, No. 12, pp. 3-9. Revolt (June 4, 1938), Vol. I, No. 6, pp. 14-16; (Oct. 29, 1938), Vol. I, No. 11, pp. 20-22; (Nov. 19, 1938), Vol. I, No. 12, pp. 10-11.

¹² Fighting Worker, April 1, 1938, p. 2; Nov. 1, 1938, p. 2. Revolt (April 23, 1938), Vol. I, No. 3, p. 9; (Aug. 27, 1938), Vol. I, No. 9, pp. 18-19; (Nov. 19, 1938), Vol. I, No. 12, pp. 19-21. Revolutionary Workers League, Shall Workers Support a Labor Party? passim; Labor and Farmer-Labor Parties, passim.

tendencies, exposing of Labor party idea, militant class struggle tactics in trade unions, fight against imperialist war, opposition to collective security, etc.) can restore the Communist movement to its correct path. The first step in this direction is the establishment of a Fourth Communist International.¹⁴

For a more detailed study of the RWL, the reader is referred to its literature, cited in the footnotes.

Leninist League

History. The Leninist League was formed by George Marlen and a group of associated Marxists-Leninists in 1937. Marlen had been a member of the Communist party from its early days until 1933 when he withdrew most reluctantly from the movement. He then joined the Communist League of America (the official Trotskyist organization) which subsequently merged with other left-wing elements to form the Workers Party. He remained in this organization until it joined the Socialist party (1936). Many of those who refused to go along with the main body of Trotskyists, including Marlen, formed the Revolutionary Workers League.² Shortly thereafter he found himself in disagreement with the Oehler-Stamm leadership of the Revolutionary Workers League on the Russian question. Marlen charged Oehler and Stamm with a fundamental theoretical error in characterizing Stalinism as "bureaucratic centrism", an error emanating from Trotsky him-

¹³Revolutionary Workers League, The Revolutionary Marxian Party, the Spanish Civil War and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, passim. Fighting Worker, Nov. 15, 1936, pp. 1-2. Fourth International (July, 1938), Vol. III, No. 11, pp. 1-11. Revolt (April 9, 1938), Vol. I, No. 2, pp. 12-13.

¹⁴Fighting Worker, Nov. 1, 1936, p. 1. Revolutionary Workers League, The Workers' Answer to Boss War, p. 22.

¹Marlen, Stalin, Trotsky or Lenin, p. 9.

²Ibid., pp. 144, 465.

self.³ Marlen contended that the correct formulation was, "Stalinism is bureaucratic centralism of the workers State."⁴ He regarded this of fundamental importance, adding:

"All the intolerance and bigotry of the Stalinites, all the lies, including the one of building a Socialist society within the Soviet Union, all the hypocrisy, treachery, betrayals, crimes, outrages and horrors committed in the name of Communism are a consequence of Stalinism's defense of the material and political interests of the bureaucracy and not as a result of the 'theory' of Socialism in one country, of 'stupidity', 'vacillation', 'errors' and 'impotence', as Trotsky imagined. Ignoring the fundamental difference between classic Centrism which does not represent any special historical economic and political layer, and the Stalinist reaction which does, Trotsky confuses these totally alien to each other currents. He overlooks the fact that Centrism, which veers between Marxiam and Reformism, is a tendency within the labor movement in the capitalist countries, while Stalinism, which is reactionary in its uninterrupted development, is a poison weed on the soil of a workers State and is misdirecting that State . . ."⁵

"Marlen contended that nothing can prevent the eventual establishment of world fascism if Stalinism is not unmasked in time, if the international proletarian vanguard is not released from the tentacles of this horrible monster. The existence of Stalinism within the working class is a guarantee of the victory of Fascism. In America, Marlen insisted, all those who are sincere in their allegiance to the workers' cause must fight the Stalinist scourge with their might and main. . . ."⁶

Marlen's approach, in his own words, "was crushingly defeated" at the Revolutionary Workers League convention (1936).⁷ After the convention, he attempted to apprise the membership that he had no choice but to leave the organization, since he was forbidden to present his viewpoint within or without the R.W.L. He was thereupon expelled by the National Committee of the R.W.L. as an "ultra-Left sectarian".⁸

Criticism of Trotsky and the Socialist Workers Party. Marlen has come

³Idem.

⁴Ibid., p. 466.

⁵Ibid., pp. 466-467.

⁶Ibid., pp. 476-477.

⁷Ibid., pp. 477-478.

⁸Ibid., p. 482.

to the conclusion that not only has Stalin broken with Marxism-Leninism but also has " . . . Trotsky, the leader of the Opposition to Stalin, abandoned Marxism-Leninism."⁹ He has based his contention upon these considerations: (1) Trotsky has underestimated and has mistaken the role of Stalinism in the international revolutionary working class movement. (2) Trotsky's "French turn" constituted a betrayal of Marxism-Leninism. (3) the Socialist Workers party has shown "crass opportunism" in advocating the formation of a Labor party.

The basis for Marlen's contention that Trotsky has underestimated Stalin's role is his (Marlen's) conviction that Stalin's policies have not been mere blunders but deliberate attempts to emasculate the international proletariat in order to retain personal power. On this point he has strongly expressed himself:

"Yes, the Stalinist renegades and Judases know how to forestall Fascism. They are consciously and deliberately selling out the international proletariat to bloody capitalist reaction."¹⁰

" . . . Stalin studied not only in books but in living reality. He and his underlings have stored up a considerable amount of knowledge and experience which they could employ in the interests of the international proletariat were it not for the fact that they have given up and gone against this class, in order to capture and perpetuate their personal power.

"Stalin and his clique are consciously and remorselessly leading the international proletariat to ruin. Precisely because they possess some knowledge of Marxism-Leninism are they so efficient in their dastardly work of forestalling not Fascism but the world proletarian revolution."¹¹

"Stalin and his clique of scoundrels are not hopeless idiots; they are shrewd bureaucrats holding to their special interests."¹²

Trotsky's first error, in the eyes of Marlen, has thus been to characterize acts of Stalin as "mistakes" rather than deliberate betrayals to further the interests of the Stalin bureaucracy.¹³ As specific examples, Marlen

⁹Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 297.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid., p. 188.

¹³Ibid., pp. 84-144.

has pointed to Trotsky's analysis of the German catastrophe¹⁴ and the Chinese revolution.¹⁵ Marlen has also added that from about 1923 until 1934, Trotsky made no attempt to unmask the betrayals of Stalin and build a new party, but rather attempted to reform Stalinism and "correct" the party line.¹⁶

The second serious error made by Trotsky, declared Marlen, was the "French turn"; by urging his followers in France to join the Socialist party (a step which set a precedent for the American Trotskyists to follow) Trotsky departed from Leninism because the Second International was hopelessly reformistic in its outlook and could not be expected to lead a workers' revolution.¹⁷

Finally, Marlen declared, the reversal of its stand on the Labor party by the American Trotskyists was another evidence of its opportunism and inability to give leadership to a revolutionary vanguard movement. Its previous position of opposing in principle the formation of a Labor party was correct; no subsequent analysis has successfully refuted that viewpoint, Marlen held.¹⁸

Criticism of Other Movements. Marlen has been both bitter and vitriolic in his criticism of rival political movements, all of which, to him, have betrayed Marxism-Leninism. In Stalin, Trotsky or Lenin, he has exposed, in his own light, the ineptitudes of the Socialist and the Communist movements, the Lovestone movement,¹⁹ and the Field, Oehler and Weisbord

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 117,125.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 221.

¹⁶In Defense of Bolshevism, No. 2, p. 3. (undated).

¹⁷Marlen, op. cit., pp. 146-152, 422-423.

¹⁸"Trotskyism and the A.L.P." In Defense of Bolshevism (Aug., 1938), Vol. I, No. 7, pp. 1-16.

¹⁹Marlen, op. cit., pp. 73-77, 222-223, 417-420. In Defense of Bolshevism (April 5, 1938), Vol. I, No. 4, pp. 6-9; (Jan., 1939) Vol. II, No. 1, pp. 49-53.

groups. His polemics are detailed, and it is impossible to discuss them here.

"The Task of the Hour". Marlen has contended that a Leninist movement worthy of the name is non-existent; the position of revolutionary Marxists today is analagous to that of the Bolsheviks in 1914 who had to start at scratch to rebuild a new working class International. The chief tasks of the proletariat, Marlen has held are: to direct its chief blows at the opportunism within the ranks of the working class, and expose the utter bankruptcy and corruption of Stalinism; to return to the fundamentals of Leninism; and to march forward towards a Fourth International.²²

Despite his severe criticism of Trotsky, he has acknowledged the debt of the working class to Lenin's collaborator, and has expressed the hope that Trotsky will abandon his errors and return to the true path of Leninism on which he once trod.²³

"And let there be no confusion, uncertainty or hesitation regarding the central and primary task the revolutionary workers face today. The task is to frustrate the new crimes against the toiling masses of all countries daily concocted, in the sheltering recesses of the Kremlin Palace. . . . The task is TO STOP STALINISM; to remove Lenin's cloak from its misshapen, hideous carcass and tear the Red mask off its face of death; to shatter its treacherous bloodstained weapon into atoms; to hurl it aside, clearing the road for genuine Bolshevism; to remove the heavy bandage from the eyes of the tormented toiling masses and lead them to scale the ramparts of crumbling capitalism in the final assault upon the bourgeoisie."²⁴

Marlen has contended that the limited strength of the Leninist League does not make feasible the presentation of a detailed program to the proletariat at the present time. The chief task must be to gather together the

²⁰Marlen, op. cit., pp. 464-467, 476-484.

²¹Ibid., pp. 459-493.

²²Ibid., pp. 9, 463, 484-485, 491-493.

²³Ibid., p. 492.

²⁴Ibid., p. 491.

advanced workers who will form the nucleus of the new party. This revolutionary vanguard must hammer away at Stalin's anti-Leninist policies until its forces are sufficiently strong to carry the fight to the masses, who will not be amenable to revolutionary Marxism until Stalinism has been completely exposed.²⁵

Although the road ahead may seem dark and long, Marlen has nevertheless concluded on an optimistic note:

"Under the pressure of events and relentless exposure by true followers of Marx and Lenin, the dark flood of the Stalinist reaction will recede. The skies will brighten. A new era will dawn upon the world and will regenerate hope, courage and enthusiasm in the hearts of the misled and betrayed masses. . . . Tomorrow's sun belongs to the working class. The Fourth International will yet lead the armies of the proletariat and all the oppressed in a fight to an end against the international bourgeoisie, against all open and concealed agents of capitalist slavery -- towards the establishment of the undistorted world dictatorship of the proletariat, towards the Communist Society.

"LONG LIVE THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL!"²⁶

For further details regarding the Leninist League, the reader is referred to Marlen's Stalin, Trotsky or Lenin, and to the monthly publication, In Defense of Bolshevism.

Miscellaneous Splinter Groups

The first group which resigned from the Communist League of America about 1931, was headed by one Bordiga, who organized the Italian Left Fraction of Communism.¹ The unavailability of any of its literature to this writer has made it impossible to present the divergent viewpoint which led to the split. For a more recent statement of its position, the reader

²⁵"What is to be Done," In Defense of Bolshevism (Jan., 1939), Vol. II, No. 1, pp. 57-60.

²⁶Marlen, op. cit., pp. 492-493.

¹Schachtman, "Footnotes for Historians," New International (Dec., 1938), Vol. IV, No. 12, p. 377.

is referred to its unity negotiations with the League for a Revolutionary Workers Party, which failed.²

Among the most recent (about 1938) Marxian splinter groups to appear in the United States have been the following: the Marxist Workers League, the Revolutionary Marxist League, and the Revolutionary Communist Vanguard. Their founders were at one time or another associated with the main stream of the American Trotskyist movement. They have all, each in his own way, concluded that Trotsky has departed from the fundamentals of Leninism, and that a new revolutionary movement is necessary to restore these principles.

The Marxist Workers League was founded by one Mienov who developed differences with the Oehler group on the Spanish question and who has appeared to support the thesis that the Soviet Union is no longer a workers' state. The official organ of the League is the Spark, a monthly magazine.

The theses of the Revolutionary Marxist League, founded by one Joerger, and the Revolutionary Communist Vanguard, founded by one Fleming, appear to be in a process of formulation at this writing. The former has published Revolutionary Action and the latter Creative Communism, both appearing at irregular intervals.

²Italian Left Fraction of Communism, "Unity Statement," New International Bulletin (May, 1936), Vol. I, No. 4, pp. 1-iv.

CHAPTER XLII

MISCELLANEOUS MARXIAN MOVEMENTS

Workers Socialist Party

History. The Workers Socialist party (not to be confused with the Socialist Workers party -- the party of the American Trotskyists) was first organized in Detroit, Michigan, in July, 1916. Although this organization lasted about two years, it was subsequently revived as the Socialist Educational Society of New York in 1921. As a result of contacts made with workers in other large American cities, the organization expanded; its name was changed to the Workers Socialist Party in 1929. This party is affiliated to the Socialist Party of Great Britain, Australia, Canada and New Zealand.¹

Principles. The Workers Socialist Party has declared that it is thoroughly Marxian in its analysis of capitalism, and in its prognosis. Its objective, simply stated, is that the capitalist system must give way to a new social order, a socialist society.² This goal of socialism can be achieved only by a social revolution, and not by any piecemeal reform.³ The technique for accomplishing the social revolution is strictly parliamentary,⁴ however; force and violence are strongly condemned.

*This political machinery must be captured by the workers organising themselves into a political party, having for its object the overthrow of the present social system and the establishment of a system of society based

¹Socialist Party of Great Britain, Socialism, p. 1.

²Ibid., p. 32.

³Socialist Party of Great Britain, The Socialist Party--Its Principles and Policy, pp. 30-33.

⁴Ibid., pp. 27-28.

upon common ownership of the means of living. Thus organised they must wrest control of the political machinery from the ruling class by means of the ballot, and having achieved this control, must use it to strip the capitalist class of their possessions, and consequently of their privileges.

"The vote is to be the weapon. . . ."⁵

The Workers Socialist party has inclined to the view that the emancipation of the working class is bound up with the latter's thorough grounding in the principles of Marxian socialism; in a word, education. Workers must be familiarized with the causes of poverty, depressions, wars; they must be made to see that capitalism breeds these ills, that only socialism can eliminate them. When they are convinced of the rightness of a Socialist society, they have the power and the means to vote it into existence and abolish capitalism with all its concomitant evils.

The WSP is thoroughly convinced that " . . . Effective socialist organisation cannot develop more quickly than the spread of socialist knowledge. . . ."⁶ It has therefore limited its membership strictly to persons who are well versed in the principles of Marxian socialism; they alone will be steadfast in their support of socialist agitation and organization because they alone are convinced of the correctness of the socialist solution for the dilemmas of capitalism.

"The Socialist Party of Great Britain, together with its associated parties in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States of America, is sharply distinguished from other organisations claiming to be socialist by the care that it takes to ensure that none but socialists shall become members. At first sight it may be questioned by the onlooker whether any such distinction exists. It may be said, for example, that there are many organisations the members of which are required to declare that they are socialists. Nevertheless, the difference is a real one, for the Socialist Party of Great Britain demands of its members something more than a formal declaration that they are socialists. Applicants for membership are required to sign the Declaration of Principles printed on the inside cover of this pamphlet, and

⁵ Socialist Party of Great Britain, Socialism, pp. 41-42.

⁶ Socialist Party of Great Britain, The Socialist Party--Its Principles and Policy, p. 1.

are expected to satisfy the branch before which their application comes that they understand and accept the principles in question."⁷

"Socialism will not be possible until the mass of the workers understand it and are prepared to vote for it. If a working class that did not understand Socialism were to vote for it, the result would only be chaos, as the first attempts to put it into operation would bewilder the majority of people and leave the way open for a counter-revolution. . . ."⁸

Although the WSP has not expressed any hostility towards the trade union movement, it has warned workers that too much must not be expected from this quarter. Even as workers have been "sold out" by their political parties, so too have the trade unions betrayed them, the Workers Socialist party has alleged.⁹

Its analysis of war follows the Marxian pattern: wars are the results of conflicting imperialist interests; they are inevitable under capitalism; only a new socialist order can abolish them.¹⁰ The WSP has utterly repudiated the idea that either the League of Nations or "collective security" offers the working class a road to peace; these are but capitalist devices which are snares for the workers.¹¹

Criticism of the Socialist and Communist Parties. The Workers Socialist party has presented the following as its chief differences from the Socialist and Communist movements: (1) In its objective, the W.S.P. has advocated "Common or Social Ownership"; it has maintained that the Socialist party has espoused "State or Government Ownership" and the Communist party a "Soviet America", both of which differ from its own conception of the goal.¹² (2) Nowhere in the literature of the WSP is any program of immediate demands to be found. Like the Socialist Labor party (although not necessarily for the

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Socialist Party of Great Britain, The Socialist Party of Great Britain and Questions of the Day, p. 67.

⁹ Ibid., pp. 21, 66.

¹⁰ Socialist Party of Great Britain, War and the Working Class, passim.

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 24-29.

¹² Socialist Party of Great Britain, Socialism, pp. 29-32.

same reasons), it has opposed all proposals for piecemeal amelioration of the plight of the working class; it has advanced only an out-and-out program for achieving socialism. While the Socialist and Communist parties have organized workers into trade unions and other mass organizations to involve them in the class struggle, the Workers Socialist party has tended to stress education almost entirely as the vehicle for conversion. (3) Its struggle against religion has formed an integral part of its program.¹³ The Socialist and the Communist parties, it has alleged, have not waged an adequate struggle against the "opiate of the people", but rather, for the most part, have maintained a discreet silence on this score. (4) Finally, the WSP has rejected the technique of Marxism-Leninism for the conquest of political power. It has argued that armed revolt cannot succeed against the superior forces of the capitalist state; the parliamentary technique offers greater possibilities of success.¹⁴ The W.S.P. has also been extremely critical of the leadership furnished the Soviet Union by Stalin and his associates. To give a random example, it has accused the Soviet Union of supplying Germany with ferro-manganese, indispensable in the manufacture of war material.¹⁵

For further details concerning the Workers Socialist party, the reader is referred to its literature.¹⁶

¹³ Socialist Party of Great Britain, Socialism and Religion, passim.

¹⁴ Socialist Party of Great Britain, The Socialist Party of Great Britain and Questions of the Day, pp. 58-64.

¹⁵ S.R., "Russian Help For German Armament," The Socialist Standard (Dec., 1938), Vol. 412, No. 35, p. 183.

¹⁶ The following magazines are official: The Socialist Standard, the official organ of the Socialist Party of Great Britain; The Western Socialist, the official organ of the Socialist Party of Canada; The Socialist, the official organ of the Workers Socialist Party of the U.S.A. These magazines are published monthly.

Proletarian Party of America

History and Principles. The Proletarian Party of America was first organized in 1920. Its nucleus was composed of members of the Left wing of the Socialist party of Michigan which had left that organization in 1919 and had subsequently developed differences with the other American Left wing forces which united to form the official Communist movement in the United States, affiliated to the Communist International.

The Proletarian Party has always regarded itself as a party of revolutionary Marxism, dedicated to the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of a socialist society, in accordance with the principles of Marx and Lenin.

" . . . The Proletarian Party is the American party of revolutionary Marxism, the only genuine Communist party in America. . . ."¹

" . . . From its inception, the Proletarian Party openly proclaimed itself to be the basic communist party of America. Its revolutionary objective was winning the workers to a recognition of the need for establishing a new social order. The proclaimed method was through revolutionary political action for the overthrow of the capitalist system and the setting up of a new form of government through which the working class could wield its political power and exercise its authority over society -- the dictatorship of the proletariat."²

Strategy and Tactics.³ In the main, the Proletarian party has recognized the need for carrying on its activities wherever workers can be organized and made to function as workers: in trade unions, in unemployed organizations, and in a political party based upon independent working class action directed towards the overthrow of the capitalist system. The most noteworthy respect in which its strategy has differed from that of the

¹Proletarian News, Nov. 1938, p. 5.

²Proletarian Party of America, The Proletarian Party -- Its Principles and Practices, p. 1, (Leaflet).

³Keracher, Proletarian Lessons, pp. 24-25.

Communist party is in its categorical rejection of any program of immediate demands.

"First of all, the Proletarian Party is not a reform organization. It has no 'immediate demands' in its program. It holds that any immediate demands that can be obtained by the workers under capitalism can be procured through the action of the unions and the unemployed organizations."⁴

Support of Communist International. Despite differences which made its affiliation to the Communist International impossible in 1919, the Proletarian party has given its unswerving support to the Communist International.

"The Proletarian Party recognizes the Communist International as the only International worthy of the support of the workers, and, in addition, while critical of its errors, it recognizes the Communist International as the best International which the world's workers have as yet brought forth."⁵

"The C.I. and the Soviet Union are not only the object of fascist enmity but they are the bulwark against fascism. The C.I. fights fascism everywhere. Our criticism is not against this necessary struggle but the manner in which it is carried on. Where it takes the form of defense of democracy there is real danger that the class issue will be sidetracked and capitalist democracies defended by the life blood of workers which at best would simply be defending capitalist imperialism."⁶

Support of the Soviet Union. The Proletarian party has also given its endorsement to the policies and practices of the Soviet Union. Its shortcomings have been characterized as due largely to factors beyond its control. Leftist critics of the Soviet Union have been severely taken to task for their unreasonable criticism of its policies, criticism alleged to be based upon ignorance, misrepresentation, or both."⁷

"The Soviet Union is not regarded by the Proletarian Party as the land of a new form of capitalism, as claimed by some alleged revolutionary parties. While aware of the fact that communism has not yet been introduced in the U.S.S.R., because such a development requires time and because a hostile capitalist world is forcing the U.S.S.R. to retain armies -- which is not compatible with communist society -- we see in the U.S.S.R. an advancing form of proletarian state socialism, an economic and political transitional form leading to communism."⁸

⁴Proletarian Party of America, op. cit., p. 2.

⁵Ibid., p. 3.

⁶Proletarian News, July, 1938, p. 3.

⁷Proletarian News, July, 1938, p. 4; Nov., 1938, pp. 4,5.

⁸Proletarian Party of America, op. cit., p. 3.

"With reaction triumphant throughout the bourgeois world, the Soviet Union still remains a tower of strength and inspiration and inspiration to the class-conscious workers of all lands. Let us renew our efforts to emulate the achievements of the working class of the Soviet Union."⁹

Criticism of Communist Party. Despite its endorsement of the Communist International and the Soviet Union, the Proletarian party has been sharply critical of the present position of the American Communist party. It has struck out sharply against the C.P.'s alleged defense of capitalist institutions, its class collaboration policies of supporting Roosevelt, and its perversion of the American "revolutionary tradition" to make proletarian heroes out of Paul Revere, Thomas Jefferson, and George Washington, to name a few, who, to the Proletarian party, were never concerned with proletarian ideals of democracy and revolution but were rather representative of the American bourgeoisie.¹⁰

"Flunkayism characterizes the whole present attitude of the 'Communist' party, flunkayism to the Rooseveltian administration and its alleged 'new deal' policies. The membership of the 'C.' P. is now loud in its praise of the Democratic party. . .

"When Kautsky championed the cause of 'democracy' against 'dictatorship' he was defending what the 'Communist' party is now defending. He spoke of 'pure democracy' and they speak of 'democracy' in general, without any class qualifications. Browder, Foster and Company, just like Kautsky did, try to hide the fact that it is capitalist democracy (and consequently capitalism) that they are supporting. Democracy in general does not exist and never did."¹¹

For further details of the Proletarian party, the reader is referred to its monthly newspaper, Proletarian News.

Proletarian Group¹

The Proletarian Group (Proletarische Gemeinschaft) was organized about

⁹Proletarian News, Nov. 1938, p. 4.

¹⁰Proletarian News, July, 1938, pp. 5,7; Aug. 1938, pp. 4,5.

¹¹Proletarian News, August, 1938, p. 5.

¹The brief account is based upon a communication from Wendelin Thomas, and an examination of the files of the Proletarian' Group's monthly publication, Proletarian Outlook (formerly known as Proletarian Group).

1935 in New York City. Although open to all workers, irrespective of occupation, nationality or race, its membership is principally German. Its basic aspects are Marxian, but it has permitted within its organization different interpretations of Marx. "Practically the differences represent themselves in either the affirmative or negative answer of the question whether the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' is possible, probably or advisable."

Members of the Proletarian group have also expressed differences of opinion on the nature of fascism and allied problems. There is unanimity of opinion, however, on the question of the nature of the Soviet Union. They have denied that it is a workers' state or that it is in the process of transition to a socialist system.

The Proletarian Group is democratically organized and administered. Its officials are changed at least every year to prevent any domination by a bureaucracy. Its monthly publication Proletarian Outlook has carried many articles representing many viewpoints on all phases of socialism, communism, capitalism and fascism. The magazine serves as a democratic forum for the clarification of ideas on these basic problems.

Groups of Council Communists¹

History. The Groups of Council Communists was founded in 1933. It was known at first as the United Workers Party, but its name was changed to the present one the following year. It is affiliated to the Groups of International Communists whose tendency has been traced back to the years

¹For a general survey, see Mattick, "Groups of Council Communists," Social Frontier (April, 1939), Vol. V, No. 44.

preceding the World War (1914). In 1920, its members who had adhered to the newly-formed Communist International were expelled. "Lenin's pamphlet, 'Radicalism, an Infantile Disease of Communism' (1920) was written to destroy the influence of these groups in western Europe."² Small groups of Council Communists have since continued to function in Germany, Holland, England, France and Belgium. In the United States, members of this movement have been recruited from former organizations as well as from among workers with no previous Marxian affiliations.

Principles of Marxism.³ The Groups of Council Communists have alleged that they derive their theoretical formulations directly from Marx. They do not regard themselves as disciples of any of Marx's interpreters or commentators. They have opposed the teachings of Kautsky, Lenin (including Stalin and Trotsky); they have quoted with approval Luxemburg's criticism of Leninism,⁴ but do not consider themselves followers of Luxemburg either. Their movement is dedicated to the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist system.

"We are not a Leninist but a Marxian organization."⁵

"Our theory and practice is a Marxian one, and we consider ourselves the real communist movement of the present and the future. We shall work for unity between groups such as ours in the many countries thruout the world, to bring into being a real revolutionary International on the basis of this program."⁶

Criticism of Leninism. Although both movements have dedicated themselves to the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist system, the Groups

²Communication from Paul Mattick.

³For a statement regarding its position on several important phases of Marxism, see Mattick, The Inevitability of Communism, *passim*.

⁴United Workers Party of America, Bolshevism or Communism, p. 4. Luxemburg, Leninism or Marxism, *passim*.

⁵United Workers Party of America, op. cit., p. 3.

⁶United Workers Party of America, World-Wide Fascism or World Revolution, p. 26.

of Council Communists have nevertheless sharply distinguished their own theories and practices from those of the Leninists, which they have analyzed, evaluated, and rejected. The Groups of Council Communists have considered Lenin as one who applied Marxism to the conditions of a backward, agricultural country. They do not think his strategy and tactics can be applied elsewhere with success.

"The success of Lenin and Trotsky is an historical one; it does not assure the same success in another period under different conditions. 'Back to Lenin' is absolutely meaningless as the fight for the revolution takes place in highly developed industrial countries. That is, under capitalism, in a permanent crisis, on an international scale. As far as Lenin is concerned he contributed toward Marxism no more and no less than the practical application of the Marxian call for a dictatorship, in a modified form, in a backward country. This modification was due to the backwardness of Russia and the weakness of its working class compared with the peasantry. To imitate the Russian experience, to go back to that which gives Lenin value, is in a Marxian sense pure stupidity. . . ." ⁷

The Council Communists have reached a number of notably adverse judgments regarding the consequences of Leninism in the Soviet Union and the international working class movement. First and foremost, they have denied that the Russian Revolution was a proletarian revolution, in its aims, objectives or leadership. ⁸

"I deny the assumption . . . that the Bolshevik Revolution had proletarian aims. . . .

" . . . Proletarian objectives, first of all, must incorporate the abolition of the proletarian class through the abolition of all class relations. . . .

" . . . That the Russian Revolution first of all was a peasant revolution cannot be denied; that these peasants, striving for land and property, had no proletarian objectives is obvious. . . ." ⁹

" . . . The Russia of today represents the essential aspirations of the early Bolsheviks before and after the October Revolution. That the Bolsheviks carried through a bourgeois revolution of which the bourgeois was no longer capable, was stated many times by Lenin himself. The fact that

⁷United Workers Party of America, Bolshevism or Communism, p. 3.

⁸Anti-Parliamentary Communist Federation, The Bourgeois Role of Bolshevism, passim.

⁹Mattick, Contributor to Symposium, "Was the Bolshevik Revolution a Failure?" Modern Quarterly (Fall, 1938), Vol. XI, No. 1, p. 16.

this revolution, essentially bourgeois in its tasks, made use of a Marxian terminology, gave rise to the illusion that its socialistic trends were strong enough to alter fundamentally its original character. However, all that happened was that the Bolsheviks were not only forced or willing to fulfill the function of the bourgeoisie, but by this process they became the new ruling and exploiting class."¹⁰

Another criticism made of Leninism has been that it very quickly superseded the proletarian dictatorship by a dictatorship of the party over the proletariat and finally wound up by establishing a rule by and for a bureaucracy.¹¹

Council Communists have also denied that the Soviet Union is a workers' state and, consequently, must be defended by the international proletariat in the event of another world war. The Soviet Union today embodies, it is charged, state capitalism.¹²

"To call the international working class to the defense of the Soviet Union, means also, in the present stage of Russian development, to prepare for a new 1914. There is no possibility any more, of a general onslaught of all capitalist nations on Russia. In the coming war different blocs of states will oppose other blocs, and Russia will be in one or the other. It will fight on the side of capitalist allies and force workers to fight once more for capitalist interests. The defense of the Soviet Union can not be included any more in a program of a revolutionary organization. The U.W.P. does not recognize a fatherland of the workers. It fights under all circumstances the bourgeoisie of its own country. It will support only the proletarian revolution in Russia, which will have to do away with the present form of state capitalism.

"We do not . . . recognize in Russia a workers' state that is an instrument for building up socialism in Russia. The most essential character of a workers' state is its destruction of the old bureaucratic apparatus and that the whole political and economic process is carried through by the proletariat directly in the soviet organization. But in Russia the soviets were more and more restricted; more and more of the functions they first performed had to be relinquished to the party bureaucracy. The Leninist goal: 'state capitalism under the control of the workers', has cut out the workers entirely; what is left is state capitalism. The bolsheviks have destroyed not the bureaucracy, but the beginnings of communism."¹³

¹⁰Ibid., p. 17.

¹¹Ibid., p. 17. United Workers Party of America, World-Wide Fascism or World Revolution? p. 18.

¹²"The Marxist Ideology in Russia," Living Marxism (March, 1938), Vol. IV, No. 2, pp. 44-50.

¹³United Workers Party of America, Bolshevism or Communism, p. 13.

Another significant criticism has been its allegation that the delegates of the Soviet Union have dominated the Communist International to the point where the interests of the Soviet Union, notably its foreign policy, have been given preference over, and have often been opposed to, those of the world proletariat.¹⁴

Stalinism versus Trotskyism? The Council Communists have held invalid the contention of both the Stalinists (that the banner of Lenin must be carried forward), and the Trotskyists (that there must be a return to the principles of Lenin which the Stalinists have abandoned); both versions of Leninism as the present need of the world proletariat have been repudiated.

"In our opinion a distinction between Stalinism and Leninism is impossible, as the first was the result, the actual outcome of the latter. So in our opinion, a distinction between Trotskyism and Stalinism is only possible on a purely conceptual, that is unreal basis. In reality this distinction does not exist, and the failure of the Trotsky group to differentiate not only on tactical questions, but also on questions of principle is more than proof of this.

"In our opinion the policy of Stalin historically is not only defeated, but the whole Bolshevik policy, which includes Lenin and Trotsky, has found its logical end. The Bolshevism of all forms is bankrupt. The question is not Stalinism or Leninism, but Bolshevism or Communism. . . ."¹⁵

Program of Action. The Groups of Council Communists have formulated no definite program of action which they have offered to the world proletariat. " . . . they refuse today to present a 'program' in the sense other organizations have a program, but work with a few principles to discover ways and means for a new and more successful class struggle policy."

The following are the fundamental theses which they have advanced as the basis for a new Communist movement: destruction of existing trade union movements and workers' political parties; the creation of workers' councils to serve numerous functions hereinafter described.

¹⁴Paul Mattick, op. cit., pp. 18-20. United Workers Party of America, World-Wide Fascism or World Revolution, p. 18.

¹⁵United Workers Party of America, Bolshevism or Communism, pp. 3-4.

¹⁶
Abolish Trade Unions. The Council Communists have taken the position that the trade union movement, instead of building up a bulwark against fascism, has actually helped foster its growth and development; they have therefore urged that workers give no support to the labor movement but rather attempt to destroy it.

"The success of the trade unions depends on the condition where in a section of the workers better themselves at the expense of the rest of the working class. It presupposes a division of the workers into the organized minority and the unorganized majority. It can at no time represent the interests of the working class."¹⁷

"The 'boring from within' policy to capture the unions or to revolutionize the trade unions is just as impossible as the Socialist policy of revolutionizing the capitalist government. The new communist trade unions, in countries where they had a chance to develop, turned just as reactionary as the old ones.

"When the capitalist crisis deepens to a dangerous stage, capitalism will destroy the trade unions or make them servile Fascist organizations operating against the workers. They can no longer allow them to function independently because of the danger that the leadership may lose their control and the workers may precipitate a struggle which would be dangerous to capitalism in such a precarious period.

"In the permanent crisis, the trade union movement has reached its historical end, and must be demolished as a menace to the revolutionary movement."¹⁸

" . . . The duty of the revolutionist is not to build up trade unions, but to destroy them, or weaken their influence, and prepare the workers to organize themselves as a class on the basis of factories. If this is impossible today, it will become possible and necessary in the future, and the necessity will be seen earlier by the workers if their attention is brought to this. On the basis of trade unions, a real united front of the workers becomes impossible, as the trade union is only an expression of different interests of different groups of workers. . . ."¹⁹

Liquidate Parliamentarism. Similarly, the Council Communists have advocated abandonment of political action as the instrument of working

¹⁶United Workers' Party of America, What Next for the American Workers, pp. 22-23. "The Masses and the Vanguard," Living Marxism (Aug., 1938), Vol. IV, No. 4, pp. 106-109.

¹⁷United Workers Party of America, World-Wide Fascism or World Revolution, p. 21.

¹⁸Idem.

¹⁹United Workers Party of America, Bolshevism or Communism, p. 14.

class emancipation; it has not helped the working class in the past, the allegation has been made, and it is not likely to help in the future.

"Political parties become a thing of the past. Voting and praying and all the hypocritical paraphernalia of 'democracy' are left to the bourgeoisie. . . ."20

"If parliamentarism was once a policy of the working class movement; it is at the present time absolutely meaningless. If the struggle for the vote was once a political struggle; it is now a pseudo-struggle which merely distracts attention from the real one. . . . Parliamentarism, including the 'revolutionary' brand, is class betrayal. And we need not be directed to Marx: Marxism would not be Marxism if the proper task of the labor movement in the time of Marx and Engels, was still its proper task today."21

"Parliaments belong to the capitalist class, and the capitalist system. Their function is to serve as an instrument for the legal differences between the capitalist groups inside the system. It is absolutely useless as a 'revolutionary Tribunal', and in the permanent depression cannot even allow the slightest reform in favor of the workers. The use of elections as a 'barometer of the ripeness of the working-class' is just another cover for parliamentary fakery a 'revolutionary parliamentarism' is impossible as participation in parliamentary activity is based on compromise and that means the workers must give up their real class interests."22

²³
Form Workers' Councils. The Council Communists have declared that workers must be encouraged to form workers' councils, composed of council delegates elected to make decisions relating to their working class interests. As the economic crises brought on by capitalism become more acute, these workers' councils will grow and become greater and more powerful instruments of mass action. In time, the workers' councils, acting for the entire working class, will overthrow capitalism and establish a dictatorship of (by and for) the proletariat.

20 United Workers Party of America, What Next for the American Workers, p. 24.

21 United Workers Party of America, Bolshevism or Communism, pp. 14-15.

22 United Workers Party of America, World-Wide Fascism or World Revolution, p. 28.

23 "The Self Movement of the Masses!" International Council Correspondence, (Aug., 1935), No. 10, pp. 12-19. International Council Correspondence, "General Remarks on the Question of Organization," Living Marxism (Nov., 1938), Vol. IV, No. 5, pp. 150-151.

"The labor movement of the future must take the form of workers' councils (soviets), where the leadership is supplied, not by the reactionary bureaucrats interests in holding on to lucrative jobs and making their peace with the capitalists, but by committees of action formed from the ranks of the workers themselves. These councils will arise in all places where large numbers of workers are brought together -- factories, relief agencies, civil works projects, etc. -- and will be coordinated on a national scale above all parties and bureaucracies and solely with a view to combating fascism (capitalism) and to ushering in the new society." ²⁴

7 " . . . Where workers are combined together with common interests, common situations, they will organize in the new form which cannot be controlled or destroyed. They will organize for action and select from their own ranks a leadership. The committees of action are here the only possible leadership in the workers councils, -- the Soviets. The leadership of workers, never separate from the fighting workers, under the control of the workers will suffer in case of defeat just as the workers who are defeated. The Soviets, or workers councils, which have been the real organization of workers in all working-class uprisings, becomes in the permanent crisis of capitalism the only possible form of organization. Capitalist suppression brings into being the organization and instruments of struggle.

"These organizations, in spite of their organizational weakness, will have in their ranks the real revolutionists. Their clarity will mean more in the coming mass actions, than the automatic following of leaders, which distinguishes the old labor movement. The self-initiative of the workers will characterize these movements. The Soviet becomes the practice of the working-class, and with this -- revolution becomes the question of the day. The revolution, is the work of the proletariat as a class, and the class can only be brought into action above all party and group interests, and can only be successful in this function in the form of Soviets." ²⁵

For further details regarding the principles, strategy and tactics of the Groups of Council Communists, the reader is referred to their literature and monthly magazine Living Marxism (formerly known as International Council Correspondence).

²⁴United Workers Party of America, What Next for the American Workers, p. 24.

²⁵United Workers Party of America, World-Wide Fascism or World Revolution, p. 24.

PART VIII

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

CHAPTER XLIII

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS¹Introduction

Nature of the Survey. A general survey of the theories and practices of the many contemporary Marxian political movements in the United States lends itself to many interpretations. As much as this writer is tempted to make inferences and draw general evaluative conclusions, he does not intend to do so. This section will not take the form of an evaluative analysis of the body of the work (the author reserves this for a future and separate study). It will rather be in the nature of a comprehensive factual summary which others may use, if they choose, as a basis from which to launch forth upon analysis, criticism or polemics.

Diversity and Flux of Marxian Movements. Perhaps the most startling phenomenon of all to one who has not studied the movements at close range over any period of time is their very considerable number, more than twenty of which have been described and classified herein.

A second important and equally inescapable observation is that their strategy and tactics (and even first principles) are in constant

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This summary is based upon the position of the Marxists prior to the Nazi-Soviet Pact and the outbreak of the European War (August, 1939). The far-reaching consequences of this pact, already resulting in the abandonment of Collective Security and Democracy versus Fascism by the Communist International, marks the beginning of a new epoch in the history of the contemporary Marxian political parties in the United States.

if not rapid change. So much has happened, particularly during the past decade, that the simple division of Marxists into evolutionary Socialists and revolutionary Communists is grossly inadequate.

Examples of this flux are numerous: (1) The Communist party's change on the labor party; its abandonment of dual unionism, social fascism, and the united-front-from-below in favor of trade union unity and the People's Front. (2) The Socialist party's rejection of a strictly parliamentary position on the road to power; its complete repudiation of collaboration with liberal exponents of capitalist democracy. (3) The Socialist Workers party's endorsement of the Labor party and the Ludlow referendum after vigorously condemning both. (4) The Leninist League's complete re-evaluation and condemnation of Trotskyism, past as well as present.

Marxian parties prefer to regard their doctrinaire changes as the results of their adaptation to changing objective conditions. Undoubtedly this is so in many cases: in other instances, it appears to be a matter simply of changing one's orientation, which especially becomes noticeable when one group adopts a position identical with that just abandoned by another.

A third equally startling phenomenon is that although capitalism is professedly their main enemy, a substantial part of the energies and resources of the Marxists is devoted not alone to "assaults upon the citadels of capitalism", their major objective, but to bitter and acrimonious disputes with each other, culminating at times in physical assaults and fistic combats. The stakes at issue are great and, consequently, antagonism is often stronger against those alleged to be renegades from Marxism than against the capitalists themselves, whose alleged intransigence and irreconcilability can be readily understood.

Viewed in a broader sense, these interminable Marxian conflicts may be considered sociological forces which mirror, in a small way, the dilemmas and contradictions of our society. Conservatives, liberals, and even fascists are asking, "Which way shall we turn?" Marxists, too, whose critical analyses of capitalism and its ills should provide a definite answer seem likewise uncertain in their diagnoses and prognoses.

The reader may also wonder, significance aside, who are the true Marxists, that is, whose theoretical analysis and statement of strategy and tactics are most nearly in accord with the doctrines propounded by Marx and Engels. The question is an idle one: each Marxian group (with few exceptions) modestly proclaims itself the spiritual heir of the founding Fathers. There are no criteria which any writer can apply on the basis of which any universally acceptable conclusions can be formulated. Numerous analyses in the past have yielded widely different conclusions. For example, the Communist party most outspokenly regards itself as the party of Marx (and Lenin). By any numerical test, it very clearly has the largest following. Yet, there is an almost overwhelming consensus of opinion on the part of the other Marxian groups that the present policies of the C.P. are not only unrepresentative of Marx, but actually anti-Marxian. Who, therefore, is to judge?

Basis of Marxian Divergencies. In any event, if there is no impartial authority to adjudge the genuine Marxists, and separate the true from the false, it is still possible to indicate summarily the basis for their differences. These may be discussed under the following categories: (1) The conflict in interpreting Marx. (2) The strategy and tactics necessary to implement Marxian philosophy, especially in

the light of conditions unknown to Marx: imperialism and fascism.

(3) Attitudes towards the Soviet Union. (4) Many factors, as party bureaucracy, conflicts of personality, and the desire for power and position, which have accentuated differences in theory and orientation, and have culminated in party splits.

Conflicts in Interpreting Marx

Dictatorship of the Proletariat. First and foremost, the multiplicity of Marxian parties represents a conflict in interpreting Marx. In speaking of proletarian revolution, what did he mean: the end-goal (a transformation of capitalism into socialism) or the technique as well as the goal? The cleavage here is, roughly, Kautsky (Bernstein, De Leon and others concurring) versus Lenin (Luxemburg, Trotsky, Stalin and others concurring). The pivotal issue arising from differences in interpreting the Marxian theory of the state is the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The Socialist Labor party (and its two derivative movements), the Social Democratic Federation and the Workers Socialist party (not to be confused with the Socialist Workers party) have denied that Lenin's conception of the dictatorship of the proletariat is what Marx expounded in advocating workers' seizure of power, overthrow of capitalism and establishment of a socialist society. The SDF seems to hold that the American democratic tradition and the common acceptance by victor and vanquished of the will of the people, as expressed in election results, obviates all necessity for a transitional dictatorship era in the United States; socialism can be ushered in after Socialist representatives of the people have captured the state machinery at the polls.

The followers of Lenin (the Communist party, the Socialist Workers party, the Independent Labor League of America, the numerous splinter groups, and a few miscellaneous movements), on the other hand, maintain that his conception of proletarian dictatorship is a correct presentation of orthodox Marxism. They maintain that unless a proletarian dictatorship is instituted during a transitional era, the forces of counter-revolution will destroy the new society and restore the old regime.

In the matter of the application of Lenin's theory of proletarian dictatorship to the Soviet Union, serious differences of opinion have arisen among his followers. The Communist party alone has upheld the present regime as the true and correct expression of Marxism-Leninism. All other Marxist-Leninist groups have accused Stalin of substituting the dictatorship of the Communist party and his own dictatorship over the party for that of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The nature of these charges and rebuttals will be more carefully examined in discussing the Soviet Union.

The State. All Marxists are more or less in general agreement concerning the nature of the state under capitalism. They differ on its status during a transitional era, the role it will play in a Socialist society, and its ultimate destiny. As would be expected from their attitude on the question of proletarian dictatorship, the Social Democratic Federation, the Workers Socialist party and the Socialist Labor party (including its derivative movements) are more or less in agreement that the machinery of the state, particularly the electoral system, although corrupt and manipulated by capitalist politicians to serve their own ends, can nevertheless be utilized for capturing state power. The former two also seem to hold that a workers' majority

at the polls can become the basis for transforming capitalist economy and politics into a Socialist system, over a period of years, without in any way impairing the functioning of the constitutional machinery of the political system.

The Socialist Labor party, on the other hand wishes to destroy at once the state apparatus which it regards as an instrument designed for a capitalist, and not adapted to a Socialist, society. As soon as a Socialist electorate constitutes a majority in Congress, it will vote itself out of existence and pass the reins of government over to a new workers' governmental apparatus, the Industrial Union, which will take over the industrial organization of the country and administer it according to the economic, political and social needs of the United States. The S.L.P. does not regard the functions of the Industrial Union as synonymous with those of the state, which it identifies with coercion and exploitation only.

Marxists-Leninists, on the other hand, deny that the capitalist state can in any way be utilized for ushering in a socialist society. Although full advantage is to be taken of the electoral system for propaganda purposes, Leninists seem fully agreed (with the apparent exception of the Communist party, whose position will be more fully explained below) that the all-pervasive control over school, press, radio and politics makes any conception of a constitutional victory of Marxists an illusion. They therefore look forward to a grave crisis brought on by the ever-continued malfunctioning of the economic system or a war, during which time the disorganization of the government, the demoralization of the armed forces, and the cogency of their program will make it possible for them to dislodge the capitalist politicians, take over control, and establish a dictatorship of the proletariat,

the first step in the creation of a socialist society.

Democracy. The traditional Marxian position on democracy has been to deny that the American politico-economic system can be accurately described as such; that the American "democracy" is a myth perpetrated by a ruling class in its own interest. Marxists have rather described it as a capitalist-democratic state, in which those in control of the economic order have also obtained control of the political order through domination of all avenues of information and propaganda. Marxists have denied that the blessings of American democracy fall upon the proletariat, farm workers and white collar workers; they rather hold that the "Sixty Families" are its chief beneficiaries.

The followers of Kautsky whose policies by and large dominated the old Socialist party (and the present Social Democratic Federation) nevertheless attempted to capture political offices in national and local elections, co-operating from time to time with liberal sections in American politics. The Left-Wing (Leninist) groups were unanimous (at least prior to 1935) in condemning such action as "class collaboration" policies which in essence constituted a negation of Marxian fundamentals and a betrayal of the American proletariat.

Fascism. Although not entirely agreed upon details, Marxists hold fascism to be a movement initiated, backed and supported by certain favored and strategic sections of Big Business, which hope to maintain their profits and property under a period of contracting capitalism. The movement wins to its support by false promises the lower middle class which is also seeking a way out. It finally gains

power by extreme measures, involving destruction of the labor movement, reduction of wages, speed-up system of production, and the incitation of racial and religious hatreds to provide the necessary psychological base for acquiescence. Marxists have developed differences which have become significant in the formulation of strategy and tactics for fighting fascism rather than in any theoretical statement of its nature.

Democracy versus Fascism? Prior to 1935, the two wings of the Marxian movement could again be sharply differentiated on the basis of their attitude towards this question. The Right Wing maintained that the fight for socialism would have to be side-tracked, that the forces espousing socialism should join hands with the liberal exponents of the status quo to fight for a common program of preserving, if need be, capitalist-democracy and destroying fascism, or at least preventing the latter from making any further advances. The Leninist wing was unanimous in condemning this orientation. It held that fascism arose out of the ineptitudes of capitalist-democracy; that it could not be crushed by preserving the present system but only by a militant united-front working class program of revolutionary Marxism; it further declared that those hoping to save fascism by defending capitalist democracy were again proposing policies of class collaboration which had already proved ineffective in Germany, Austria and elsewhere. The Leninists, however, were emphatic in asserting that while they condemned any measures of support for capitalist democracy, they would fight for the preservation and extension of democratic rights of workers: free speech, press, right of assembly; right to strike, picket, etc. Their action along these lines was calculated to give strength to a working class movement and by that very fact weaken the capitalist system.

After the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International,

the Communist party restated its views on democracy and fascism. Declaring that the rapid rise of fascism necessitated a Marxian re-orientation, the Communist party adopted a policy of joining forces with the liberal wing of capitalist democracy which also wished to preserve democracy from the scourge of fascism. No longer did it proclaim the issue to be socialism versus capitalism; the battle henceforth was democracy versus fascism, to be waged by People's Front governments in all the great democracies. It declared that these policies were strategic expedients and not in any way identical with the class-collaboration policies of the Social Democrats which it so vigorously condemned before 1935.

Strategy and Tactics

Basic Problems. Differences in strategy and tactics among the Marxists proceed from basic orientation, on the one hand, and from differences of opinion regarding the best method of carrying out a given orientation, on the other. In many instances the writings of Marx and Engels have not furnished specific guidance in the concrete day-to-day problems. Consequently widely-divergent solutions have been offered to many problems.

Marxian strategy and tactics have centered about these major problems: (1) Fundamental strategy in building socialism and fighting fascism. (2) Attitudes toward the Soviet Union. (3) The War question. (4) Relation of Marxian parties to each other and to the labor movement generally. (5) Activities of Marxists in trade unions and other mass organizations. (6) The formulation of a program of immediate demands. (7) The Negro and the Youth questions. (8) The New Deal. (9) The Labor party. (10) Spain. (11) Political Organization.

Fundamental Strategy. Conflicting fundamental strategies and principles have given rise to three major international movements and numerous international conferences looking forward to other new and permanent international alignments. Thus, despite their marked differences, they implicitly recognize that capitalism is international in its all-pervasiveness and control, and, consequently, can only be broken down by the combined efforts of the international proletariat.

The Second International, dominated by the ideology of Kautsky, has placed stress upon evolutionary socialism, parliamentarism, and collaboration with liberal capitalist elements, looking towards an extension of socialist ideology or a preservation from fascist encroachment of the gains already made. In the name of Marxian orthodoxy, the followers of Kautsky have denounced Leninism as despotism, dictatorship and terrorism, which it declares to be totally alien to the spirit and letter of Marx. The issue of socialism-in-one-country versus permanent revolution, which has split the ranks of the Leninists, has not created any stir within the Second International which apparently sees therein no serious problem or fundamental contradiction necessitating any controversy or schism.

In the United States, the ideology of the Second International finds its truest expression in the Social Democratic Federation, which, at this date, is not affiliated with that movement. The Socialist party, its official representative in this country, has definitely broken with the philosophy of the Second International.

The Third International, founded upon principles of revolutionary Marxism, proclaimed at its very inception that the irreconcilable struggle between workers and their capitalist enemies would be finally resolved on the barricades. It took the Second International

very severely to task for its alleged moderate and compromising attitude; adherents of that organization were later referred to as social fascists, i. e., socialists in word but fascists in deed. These alleged Marxists (and others, professed followers of Lenin who rejected the orientation of the Comintern) were declared to be the enemies from within who were holding back the revolutionary upsurge of the masses by their false and misleading doctrines. To fight these "misleaders of the working class" the tactics of dual unionism and the united-front-from-below were evolved. This era of Third Period Communism unofficially came to an end in 1935. Since then the Communist International has formulated the People's Front orientation which has brought it back, according to its critics, to policies similar to those it formerly assailed: class collaboration and evolutionary socialism.

In the United States, the Communist party officially represents the viewpoint of the Comintern. The Proletarian party, which has developed serious differences with the C.P. has also supported the policies of the Third International, but it has received neither encouragement nor recognition from that quarter.

The rise of the Fourth (Trotskyist) International is bound up with the Stalin-Trotsky controversy. The issues are numerous, the charges and counter-charges many. The principle issue, as stated by both, centers about the theory of permanent revolution versus socialism in one country. While neither denies that the international revolutionary movement has need of both tendencies, the followers of Stalin, especially since 1935, have tended to center the orientation of the Third International about the building of socialism in the Soviet Union and its

preservation from fascist attacks. The Trotskyists, on the other hand, have held that the fate and fortune of the Soviet Union are bound up with the extension of revolutionary frontiers in Europe and elsewhere; that the policies of a Marxian International must be orientated towards the needs of the workers of the world, and not towards those within the Soviet Union alone. The Fourth Internationalists have held that such policies as collective security, the People's Front, and democracy versus fascism are anti-Leninist; that the Soviet Union is not safe so long as it is surrounded by capitalist nations, whether of the fascist or democratic type; that only international revolutionary Marxism which aims at creating proletarian dictatorships in all the capitalist countries can safeguard the Soviet Union.

The official representative of the Fourth International in the United States is the Socialist Workers party. The numerous splinter groups emanating from Trotsky's basic orientation are also advocates of a Fourth International. Their differences with the Socialist Workers party and with each other on the following questions have kept them from joining forces: the nature of the Russian state; attitudes towards the Soviet Union in the event of another war in which it is involved; proper strategy and tactics in the United States; the correct policies for the Spanish Civil War; party bureaucracy.

A further example of an organized international tendency is the London Bureau whose leading sections include the POUM of Spain, the Independent Labor Party of Great Britain, the Communist Party Opposition of Germany and the Independent Labor League of America. Its differences with the Second and Third Internationals are fundamental, while those with the Fourth International are chiefly on questions of strategy and tactics.

The greater number of the Marxists parties, leagues and splinter groups have no formal organized international tendency. They are striving toward this, however, each hoping to be the American section of a Fourth (or Fifth?) International patterned after its own outlook and orientation.

The Soviet Union

A recounting of the many attitudes prevailing towards the Soviet Union among the Marxian groups lends itself to a more extensive treatment than a short summary permits. The expressions of opinion are many, ranging from unequivocal, enthusiastic endorsement to out-and-out hostility, with numerous intermediary shades.

Concurring with the views of Stalin and the Third International, the Communist party holds that the Soviet Union is the edifice of Marxism in the flesh and blood. The hardships of the era of the proletarian dictatorship are at an end; socialism, the first stage of the higher society has arrived; the state has begun to "wither away". Economic productivity has reached a new high; political and social equality are a reality at last. The new Soviet Constitution proclaiming universal suffrage has at last brought genuine workers' democracy. Education has all but banished illiteracy; literature, music, and science are now flourishing, free from the commercial and exploitative aspects of capitalist society. The chief impediments to further Soviet progress, according to the C.P. are the war threat (which menaces the Soviet Union from the West and East, and which can be forestalled by collective security agreements among the "democratic" nations with the Soviet Union) and the existence of traitors, alleged to be Trotskyists,

within the Soviet Union. The first and foremost duty of all Communists, therefore, is to defend the Soviet Union by giving unstinted support to its foreign policy.

Besides the Communist party, the Socialist Labor party and the Proletarian party have also tended to give affirmative support to the policies of the Soviet Union. At the same time these parties have been exceedingly critical of the American Communist party, thus implicitly denying that the fundamental policies of the American section of the Third International are essentially the same as those of the Soviet Union.

These three groups excepted, a dilemma has arisen on the Russian Question among many adherents to Marxism Leninism and socialism generally. In disagreement with many policies of the Soviet Union, they have found themselves in a quandary; to criticize or not to criticize has become a crucial and delicate question. To remain silent would be to give the appearance of acquiescence in and condonement of many principles and practices of which they have distinctly disapproved. Some have therefore developed the policy of critical support by which they have applauded the Soviet Union as the first great Workers' state, but have reserved the right to criticize in a friendly and fraternal manner those matters which they deem not to be in the best interest either of the Soviet Union or the workers in capitalist countries. The best example of this tendency prior to 1937 was the Independent Labor League of America whose prior break with the Comintern had come on the question of "exceptionalism". From 1928, when the Lovestoneites were expelled from the Communist party, until the time of the Bukharin-Badek trials in the Soviet Union, some ten

years later, the members of this tendency were among the staunchest supporters of the policies of the Soviet Union. Since that date, this group's support has become ever more critical until today its position is one of out-and-out hostility to the Stalin regime, but not to the Russian people or to the principles of the Revolution. It still regards the Soviet Union as a workers' state.

The Socialist party furnishes another illustration of a party whose attitude of critical support reached the straining point at the time of the Moscow trials. Its position, too, has become one of hostility to many aspects of Stalinism.

For examples of undisguised and unconcealed hostility, one turns to the Social Democratic Federation and the Socialist Workers party (and numerous splinter groups). Both condemn the policies of the Soviet Union in strong and vigorous terms, but from entirely different premises.

The Social Democratic Federation regards the events occurring within the Soviet Union (culminating in the Moscow trials) as a complete vindication of its early-enunciated position: Leninism is not Marxism but a gross distortion; its essential feature, ruthless dictatorship, has finally led to the devouring of its own children and the establishment of a totalitarian regime not unlike that of Hitler or Mussolini. Of the quarrels between Trotsky and Stalin, the S.D.F. will have none; it condemns both whose differences it represents as the falling out of knaves and scoundrels.

The Trotskyists' (SWP) criticism of the Soviet Union proceeds from a totally different orientation. They take the position that it is not Marxism-Leninism which is at fault but Stalin's theory of

socialism-in-one-country and the bureaucratic distortions arising therefrom, culminating in the Thermidorian reaction and the murder of the Old Bolshevik dissenters. They further declare that proletarian dictatorship is not indicted by the happenings in the Soviet Union, but Stalinism alone, which has substituted a one-man dictatorship over the party and the proletariat for what was intended to be a workers' democracy in a transitional era. They also ridicule the idea that the Socialist stage of the new society has arrived and that the state has begun to "wither away". They rather hold that the dictatorship of Stalin and his clique is more omnipresent than ever before, that the new Soviet Constitution is a fraud and a sham, since only the legality of the Communist party (which is controlled by Stalin's bureaucrats) is recognized, and no other party may compete with the C.P.S.U. even if it merely advocates different policies consistent with the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism. Trotskyists further hold that there are no basic civil rights which may be exercised in a way to bring one into open conflict with the status quo. They contend that the Moscow trials symbolize the ultimate fate of all who oppose the will of the dictator. In factories, again, there is not even a semblance of economic democracy; these too are autocratically managed by Stalinist bureaucrats. Even in art, literature, music and science, only that which enhances the prestige of the Stalin regime is permitted to function. Soviet intellectuals are alleged to be "artists in uniform", glorifying Stalin in song and story. Scientists whose conceptions of dialectical materialism run counter to the official version of Stalin (or who reject it in toto) find themselves in disfavor and are soon ousted from their official posts and laboratories. In short, ✓

it is claimed, political authorities have intruded themselves into realms where they do not belong, and have thus aped the technique and control methods of the totalitarian states.

Family life also, according to the Trotskyists, has been demoralized by the Stalin regime. The revolutionary heritage of women has been denied them. The bourgeois family traditions, forbidding abortions, discouraging divorce and encouraging a higher birth-rate have been restored, thus relegating women to their pre-revolutionary status of bondage.

Despite these fundamental criticisms, the Trotskyists nevertheless admit that the Soviet Union is still a workers' state because economic collectivism remains unimpaired. They hold that Stalin must be ousted and there must be a return to Leninist fundamentals (as espoused by Trotsky) if the Soviet Union is to survive.

The Splinter groups stemming from Trotsky's orientation at one time held similar views on the Russian question, but have now gone even further in their condemnation. A new thesis is slowly gaining ground among them -- that the Soviet Union can no longer be regarded as a workers' state but another aspect of totalitarianism, despite economic collectivism. These groups, consequently, have been debating other questions which have recently arisen: In the event of a general war involving the Soviet Union, how cogent is the slogan formerly raised by them, "Defend the Soviet Union"? What aid, if any, shall they give, and under what circumstances?

The War Question

The War Question. Marxists have traditionally looked upon post-Industrial Revolutionary wars as inevitable outgrowths of a malfunc-

tioning capitalist system, which has placed a high premium upon colonies as sources of raw materials and outlets for manufactured goods; these in turn have led to the development by the great capitalist powers of larger merchant marines, armies, and navies. The conflict of their imperialist aims in 1914 brought on the great war.

Although continental Marxists seriously disagreed on what was to be done after their own capitalist governments had entered the war (the Leninists alone were unequivocal in their denunciation), the American Socialist party, in whose ranks the greater number of American Marxists was then concentrated, refused to sanction the participation of the United States. The subsequent growth of the American Communist movement resulted in an even firmer stand by that group: refusal to participate in any "imperialist war"; determination to use a war crisis for the revolutionary overthrow of American capitalism.

Although all Marxists claim that they have adhered to the spirit of Marxism in their war analysis, the establishment of the Soviet Union and the menace of fascism have divided them on the specific application of the war doctrine. The Social Democratic Federation and the Communist party, for reasons definitely not in accord with each other, have urged the necessity of a practical appraisal of the situation. As has already been indicated, the S.D.F. maintains that socialism has reached a period when it is not only at a standstill and perhaps even on the decline, but when its very existence as a movement is threatened. It therefore argues that socialists must be temporarily satisfied with preserving the status quo. The Second International, representing this tendency, has therefore urged Socialists to collaborate

with liberal anti-fascist elements in the "democratic" countries, and that the latter form collective security pacts to prevent the spread of fascism. It has further argued that if the fascist-aggressor nations see the great democracies firmly united, they will hesitate to provoke war; if the fascists can be staved off long enough, their regimes will collapse of their own dead weight. The S.D.F., has therefore urged the United States to join with Great Britain, France (and the Soviet Union?) in a collective security pact and that the United States government take steps to aid the "democratic" nations with munitions, war supplies, food, clothing, etc., at the same time placing an embargo upon shipment of supplies to the fascist aggressors.

The Communist party has reached a similar position, although from a somewhat different approach. It has argued that the preservation of the Soviet Union, the first great Marxian society, is paramount; that the U.S.S.R. is surrounded by fascist foes which threaten her existence; that a world war can be averted, fascism can be stopped, and the Soviet Union saved by a series of collective security agreements involving Great Britain, France, the United States and the Soviet Union. It has denied that this is a revival of the class collaboration policies which it formerly condemned.

As far as this writer has been able to observe, collective security has been condemned by all the other Marxian groups and parties in the United States. Their general argument has been the same. No fundamental difference exists between fascist and democratic nations. Fascism arises, among other reasons, when the capitalist economy of a nation faces a breakdown and the middle class allies itself with Big Business to bring about a solution at the expense of the working class. Fascist and democratic nations (including the United States) are

imperialist at heart, and their disputes involve all the elements of capitalist economy: territories, raw materials, etc. The real enemy, as in the past, is within the United States, and not in Germany, Italy or Japan. They therefore hold that to endorse a program of collective security is to give support to American imperialist aspirations in South America and Asia. They further hold that collective security must be ineffective or must lead to war, since the fascist nations are desperate and will not be stopped by the paper agreements of their enemies; and again, if sanctions are applied, the fascists will take the necessary steps to break them by force because otherwise they are doomed to perish. Since Marxists will not support imperialist wars (the inevitable consequences of collective security, they say), they must necessarily oppose all proposals which may lead to it. Anti-collective security Marxists therefore condemn their opponents as members of the "War party". As an alternative, they favor: working class sanctions not calculated to involve the United States government in any war crisis; consumers' boycott of products of fascist nations; refusal of workers to transport munitions to countries at war; shipment of food, clothing and medical supplies by workers' organizations to workers in non-fascist countries. They demand a complete embargo upon war contraband and favor a policy of Cash-and-carry on non-contraband. In general, they are opposed to American participation in war and warn of their determination to utilize any war crisis involving the United States for the spread of revolutionary defeatism and the overthrow of the capitalist system.

Relation of Marxian Parties to Each Other and the Labor Movement Generally

The meaning of the united-front-from-below, the united front, the people's front, and organic unity have been discussed in the earlier sections of this work. What follows is but a summary of the positions taken by the various groups.

United Front. Most Marxian groups are generally agreed that the basic strategy of Marxian groups must be the united front. Granting the existence of different Marxian (and simply trade union) orientations, the far-greater number of Marxian organizations believe that common working class action (in specific instances for specific purposes) can best be achieved through this tactic.

United-Front-From-Below. The united-front-from-below is a tactic which was used almost exclusively by the Communist party during its Third Period days. The C.P. then argued that the workers were being wilfully misled in the Socialist party and the trade unions generally by a corrupt leadership whose chief function was to prolong, and not destroy, capitalism; that the only possible appeal to workers was a direct appeal "from below" in complete disregard of its non-Communist working class leadership which was designated as social-fascist. Other Marxian parties severely criticized the united-front-from-below on several grounds: they denied that the non-Communist working class leadership, however mistaken, was consciously betraying the workers whose non-revolutionary ideology it expressed as much as formulated. They further declared that, ethical aspects aside, this tactic was not a genuine call for a united front but rather an invitation to workers to abandon their own organizations and join the Communist party (or its

trade union affiliate).

The Seventh World Congress of the Comintern called an abrupt halt to the united-front-from-below. It has been used most infrequently since, the most notable example occurring in 1937 when the C.P. made an appeal to the rank-and-file of the Socialist party to expel the Trotskyists. The Socialist Workers party has, in several instances, also made use of this tactic. It has made direct overtures to the C.P. membership in numerous leaflets, giving detailed allegations of how the C.P. has betrayed Marxism-Leninism; it has urged C.P. members to join the S.W.P.

There is very little other evidence of the use of the united-front-from-below in recent years. One thing is very certain: by any empirical test, little has been accomplished through its use.

Organic Unity. The prospects of consolidating all Marxist groups into a single Marxian party on an acceptable minimum platform has been the dream of many Marxists. From time to time offers of organic unity have been made by one party to groups of similar orientation. In the abstract, many of these efforts have been lauded, but almost every group has always in effect asked for unity on its own terms. Numerous offers of organic unity were made by the C.P. to the S.P. about 1936, which offers were rejected. Early in 1939, a unity discussion was raised again by the I.L.L.A. with a view to uniting the S.P., the S.W.P., the I.L.L.A., the S.D.F., and the splinter groups. To date it has yielded no tangible results. For example, biting editorials in the publications of the S.W.P. have questioned the motives of Lovestone, charging, in effect, that he is a discredited general seeking more armies to command.

The only significant example in recent years of an actual merger is the Workers party-Socialist party entente in 1936. This ended in disaster the following year when the Trotskyists of the Workers party were expelled from the S.P.

The People's Front. Among the Marxists, the People's Front is supported only by the Communist party and the Social Democratic Federation. As has already been indicated, both hold that the basic issue confronting workers is the preservation of democracy against the inroads of fascism; both hold that the working class by itself is not strong enough to accomplish this task and that it must align itself with other anti-fascist forces in a common anti-fascist program.

Other Marxian parties and organizations are unanimous in their condemnation of the People's Front. They hold that the broadest common denominator in an anti-fascist program is the program of its right-wing adherents, which, by its very nature, must be a pro-capitalist rather than a working class program. Since, they argue, the fight against fascism is bound up with the fight against capitalism and for socialism, the policies of the People's Front must fail, as they have failed in Spain and France.

Trade Union Activities

All Marxists are again in agreement that the trade union is the front line trench in the struggle for working class emancipation. They hold that workers must be organized into trade unions, given Marxian leadership, made more militant and class-conscious by participation in day-to-day struggle against the capitalist system, and led to membership into the Marxian party.

So much for the theory, which is clear enough. In the actual trade union activities, however, the Marxian parties find themselves in sharp and often open conflict on their strategy and tactics. Many Marxists believe (or believed) that the existing trade unions -- the A.F.L. and the C.I.O. -- are dominated by pro-capitalist bureaucrats with no fundamental working class philosophy; that these "leaders" are more concerned with the preservation of the status quo (on which their high-salaried jobs depend) than with proletarian emancipation. These Marxists have therefore urged their followers to confine their major trade union activities to building up a rival trade union movement with a Marxian orientation. This policy of dual unionism which the C.P. espoused prior to 1935 led to the building up of the Trade Union Unity League, subsequently disbanded. The S.L.P. alone today is adamant in opposing existing trade unions. It views them as snares for the working class; the C.I.O. in particular is regarded as a travesty upon genuine industrial unionism which, it maintains, cannot be organized upon a pro-capitalist basis.

The bulk of the Marxist parties declare that they are fully cognizant of all the weaknesses and shortcomings of the A.F.L. and the C.I.O. They nevertheless hold that the creation of red unions on paper will accomplish nothing; it will fail to reach the great majority of the workers who will still be prey to the old bureaucratic trade union officialdom. They have therefore favored working within existing trade unions under a policy whose central tendency has been characterized as a "boring from within".

The organization of most Marxian groups into fractions within trade unions for purposes of advancing the interests of their political

movement simultaneously with that of the workers generally has given rise to the question of whether any Marxian group should attempt to dominate the trade unions and secure the passage of resolutions in consonance with its party line. Save for some elements within the S.D.F. and the S.P. who are opposed to the idea, the affirmative is the position taken by most groups. For example, the efforts of the C.P. to have resolutions passed by unions under the control of its members in favor of collective security and for affiliation with the League for Peace and Democracy have given rise to many bitter trade union controversies. Other Marxian groups have not opposed the principle of introducing such resolutions but rather their specific content.

Most Marxian organizations believe that the existence of two rival trade unions (A.F.L. and C.I.O.) has done much to damage labor's prestige and has needlessly divided labor's strength in factional disputes. They are therefore striving for trade union unity, although far from agreed upon terms.

In one group only, the S.L.P. aside, does one find a distinctly anti-trade union approach. The Council Communists have condemned the entire trade union movement for its narrow objectives, pro-capitalist and non-revolutionary outlook, and its complete domination by labor bureaucrats. It favors complete destruction of the trade union movement and recommends the building of local Council Communist groups to supplant them.

Program of Immediate Demands

With few exceptions, Marxists are agreed that a movement dedicated solely to obtaining future benefits for workers is likely to leave the

latter somewhat apathetic and indifferent. These organizations, therefore, following Marx's example in the Communist Manifesto, have advanced a program of immediate demands, consistent with the ultimate goal; in this way they hope to enlist the working and farming classes to support the party, fight to achieve these amelioratives, and indirectly advance the struggle for a socialist society. The programs formulated by the different groups differ in detail; in the main they advocate such measures as: extension of political democracy; protection of fundamental rights of speech and press; recognition of economic rights of organization, picketing, and striking; abolition of child labor and better education for children of workers; shifting of tax burdens from the poor to rich; continuation of W.P.A. and home relief, etc.

The Socialist Labor party and the Workers Socialist party (again, not to be confused with the S.W.P.) stand alone in their refusal to espouse a program of immediate demands. They have raised numerous objections to waging a political campaign around any such program. In the main, they hold that there is likely to be an abandonment of the fight for socialism in the struggle for immediate demands, and that the goal of a socialist society may become lost in the scuffle for government-owned gasoline stations. They also argue that workers are shortsighted, and that the latter will lose interest in a Socialist society; a minimum wage law and a salary increase may loom so large to them that, gaining these objectives under capitalism, they may rest content with the status quo. Consequently, say the S.L.P. and the W.S.P., there is only one demand which Marxists must make: the unconditional surrender of capitalism!

The Negro Question

All Marxian groups have eagerly turned toward the Negro as a potential ally in the struggle for socialism; he is even more oppressed and exploited than white workers. Their general position has been that the Negro must be accorded complete equality with the Whites at the polls, in factories, in trade unions, in theaters and restaurants, and in the distribution of W.P.A. jobs and home relief. Their general slogan might be summed up thus: erase the color line everywhere.

The Communist party and the Communist League of Struggle have carried their championing of the Negro a step further. They have argued that the Negroes constitute a distinct nationality occupying a contiguous territory in the South (the Black Belt) and that Negroes should be accorded the right of self-determination, i. e., to decide whether they wish to form a Black Negro Republic of their own or remain part of the United States.

This orientation of "self-determination in the BlackBelt" has been condemned by Socialists, Trotskyists, Lovestoneites and members of all other groups. They deny that the situation is analagous to that in the Soviet Union, on whichbasis it was first allegedly proposed; they hold that the Negro has no national aspirations or feelings apart from Americans generally, and that the only practical effect of such a position would be to antagonize the poor Whites of the South who otherwise are potential allies in the struggle for a Socialist America. Although the C.P. has never repudiated its Self-Determination slogan, it should nevertheless be noted that in its activities among the Negro masses this issue is no longer emphasized and brought to the foreground.

Roosevelt and the New Deal

The attitude of Marxists toward Roosevelt and the New Deal reflects in no small way their basic orientation on democracy versus fascism. At the inauguration of the New Deal in 1933, Marxists divided themselves, roughly, into three groups. At one extreme was the view promulgated by the Communist party which held the New Deal to be the initial steps leading directly to American fascism, with Roosevelt as the spokesman for Big Business. On the other extreme was the viewpoint of right-wing Socialists who held New Deal legislation, although not Socialism, to be progressive measures embodying many of the immediate demands of Socialists, consequently warranting their support.

A midway view taken by Lovestoneites, Trotskyists and left-wing Socialists was (and still is) that the New Deal is Roosevelt's contribution to the salvation of capitalism, and that while his progressive legislation should not be opposed, workers should be warned that the New Deal can never resolve the fundamental shortcomings of capitalism and restore pre-depression prosperity. These Marxian groups regard his foreign policy as out-and-out imperialism, an effort to foster the expansion of American capitalism as compensation to Big Business for the working class concessions of the New Deal. Thus the S.P., the I.L.L.A., the S.W.P., and the many splinter groups view collective security as Roosevelt's method of implementing American imperialist expansion, a policy which must ultimately lead to conflict with Germany in South America and Japan in the Far East.

Since 1935, the C.P. has modified its early position. It has

declared that the reactionary aspects of New Dealism are at an end, and the policies of President Roosevelt are progressive, both at home (New Deal) and abroad (Collective Security). This position is also shared by the S.D.F., although the members of the latter group have been exceedingly hostile towards the Communist party.

At this writing, none of the Marxian groups takes the position that Roosevelt is a fascist, although many believe (again excepting the S.D.F. and the C.P.) that his domestic policies will fail, which failure, coupled with his foreign policy, is likely to lead to war and fascism.

The Labor Party

Numerous positions, past and present, have been advanced on the Labor party issue, ranging from enthusiastic support to unequivocal opposition. On the extreme left, the Splinter groups emanating from the Trotskyist movement, and the Socialist Labor party, have unalterably opposed it. To them it represents crass opportunism, a departure from first principles, an American People's Front, and a union with the bourgeoisie and "labor fakers". They have strongly assailed all Marxian groups allegedly capitulating to this aspect of "discredited class collaboration".

Prior to 1935, the Communist party advocated a labor party "from below", that is, a party made up of the rank-and-file of the labor movement, but excluding its known leaders, such as William Green, and also those "social fascist" elements parading as Marxists and friends of labor, but declared by the C.P. to be pro-capitalist in their orientation also. Marxian critics of the C.P. characterized this proposal as an invitation to workers to join a "front organization"

controlled and dominated by the Communist party under another name. Little progress was made with this approach. After the change of line in 1935, it was abandoned.

Contemporary proponents of the labor party have expressed widely-differing ideas of the kind of labor party they will support. The Socialist party wants one rooted in the tenant-farmer as well as the trade union movement, with a working-class and anti-capitalist program which Socialists will be able to support with consistency. The Independent Labor League of America's orientation centers about the trade union movement; it concedes the cogency of making minimum demands for affiliating, but it nevertheless holds that Marxists cannot be too sectarian; as long as the labor party is based upon the more progressive sections of the labor movement it holds that Marxists must work within the Labor party and attempt to influence it towards the adoption of a vigorous working-class platform and in support of militant working-class policies.

Prior to 1938, the Trotskyists also opposed participation in any labor-farmer-labor movement, which they regarded as the essence of conciliation and compromise. Since that date, however, they have shifted their position, first to one of "critical support" and then to active support. They now hold that the farmer-labor tendency has made a permanent appearance upon the American scene, and that it would be futile to oppose it; that it should be supported, although the larger task of building the S.W.P. should not be neglected. The Social Democratic Federation's pro-labor party orientation is even less insistent upon terms than the I.L.L.A. It holds that Marxists are not in a position to dictate to the labor movement. Of only one thing is

the S.D.F. certain: it wishes to keep Communists from membership in the labor party; it holds that they have acted treacherously in the past and have betrayed the best interests of the American proletariat.

The Communist party, having abandoned its Labor party "from below" in 1935, has since come out for the formation of a Farmer-Labor party which is the equivalent of a People's Front movement. It has not been too insistent upon the terms of its support of such a movement, provided masses of workers and farmers participate.

Spain

Many Marxian groups have looked upon the recent Spanish Civil War as something of a testing ground for the validity of their general position on Marxism and the conquest of power. The Social Democratic Federation and the Communist party alone supported the Spanish People's Front government. The Socialist party, the Independent Labor League of America, the Socialist Workers party and the numerous Trotskyist splinter sects bitterly opposed it. Although these groups differed considerably among themselves, they were all more or less in agreement upon the necessity for advancing a program of socialization and colonial liberation embodying three basic ideas, all of which were absent from the People's Front program: workers' control of industry; land for the peasants; freedom for Morocco. This central tendency was represented among the Spanish Marxists by the P.O.U.M. whose policies were wholeheartedly supported in the United States by the I.L.L.A. and mildly so by the Socialist party. The Socialist Workers party and the numerous Trotskyist splinter movements were exceedingly critical of the P.O.U.M. because it had participated for a brief time in the People's Front government. Minor differences aside, their own program

in its broadest aspects was essentially similar.

The failure of the Loyalist cause has been attributed to different factors by the Marxists. The Communist party has blamed it upon the perfidy of Britain and France. The Social Democratic Federation has laid it to the treacherous role played by Stalin in deserting the Loyalists when his interests so warranted. Socialists, Lovestoneites, Trotskyists, etc., have declared that the Loyalist defeat was primarily the fruits of People's Frontism coupled with the treachery of Stalin who insisted upon a "democratic" Spain lest a revolutionary Marxian approach antagonize imperial Britain and France whose favors he was then courting. Controversy over the Spanish issue has persisted long after the termination of the conflict.

Political Organization

General Organization. In a general way, all Marxian political parties have a similar organization: the general membership elects its local officials; a party convention whose delegates are chosen from the membership, elects the highest ranking officials of the party for a given term. Each Marxist organization emphatically holds that it is democratically organized and that its policies are democratically determined by its members through regular party channels in the manner prescribed by its Constitution.

The control exercised over the membership by the National body varies; in the Social Democratic Federation and somewhat less so in the Socialist party, the tendency towards decentralization is greater than in the Leninist groups; in the former groups, disciplinary action is taken infrequently against recalcitrant members, although somewhat more

so in the S.P. in recent years.

The Leninists as a rule have a greater tradition for central organization and firm party discipline. The Communist party regards itself as a monolithic party; it expels all members deviating in theory or practice from the established party line. The Socialist Labor party (which also claims but antedates Lenin), inheriting the monolithic traditions of De Leon, is equally firm in upholding discipline, as are likewise many of the splinter groups.

Organizations like the I.L.L.A. and the S.W.P. have also adhered to the Leninist conception of discipline, but they deny that they are monolithic organizations. They maintain that they also enforce strict discipline but it is not harsh because their organizations are democratically controlled in fact as well as in theory.

Party Personnel. Since Marxism is a revolutionary movement dedicated to the overthrow of capitalism by the proletariat, Marxian parties, theoretically, have their roots in the proletarian vanguard of the trade union movement and numerous mass organizations. Although statistics are not available, it is common knowledge that all of them have been disappointed by the comparatively little headway made in recruiting trade union members from among the proletariat. Even where Marxists have been exceedingly influential in dominating trade union policies, their actual party membership is an insignificant minority in most cases.

Where Marxists have made their comparatively greatest headway has been among the intellectuals and white-collar workers. Here economic discontent has not played the only part in determining party affiliations; such non-economic factors as the desire to build a better social order,

the conviction that capitalism is doomed, emotional hatred for fascism, have driven many into the ranks of the Marxists. Indeed, in many notable instances, party leadership is in the hands of intellectuals rather than rank-and-file workers.

Party Bureaucracy. Although each Marxian party proclaims that its organization is democratically controlled and managed by its members, numerous are the tirades it launches against many of its rival Marxian groups where, it is alleged, bureaucracy is rife and party democracy is a sham and a fraud. This phenomenon of party democracy in theory but bureaucracy in practice seems to be a fairly universal complaint. Trotskyists and Lovestoneites are agreed that the C.P. is controlled by an irresponsible, undemocratic clique in the United States and the Third International. The Trotskyists also accuse Lovestone of bureaucratic irresponsibility, pointing to his expulsion of the Trotskyists from the C.P. when he was its general secretary. Similar charges of bureaucracy have been made against Cannon and Schachtman, S. W. P. leaders, by members of the Splinter groups, particularly Marlen of the Leninist League. Within the Splinter groups, accusations of the same kind have been constantly hurled back and forth. Thus, when a schism occurred within the Revolutionary Workers League, its erstwhile leaders, Oehler and Stamm, each charged the other with attempting to wreck the organization by false policies, personal ambitions, etc.

The Socialist movement has likewise been scandalized by open charges of irresponsible bureaucratic action, first in 1936 when the Social Democrats bolted and then in 1937 when the Trotskyists were expelled.

It seems fairly safe to conclude therefore, that although every

charge of undemocratic party control may not be borne out by specific investigation, nevertheless the Left too has its power politics.

Causes of Bureaucracy. On their own admission, the problem of party bureaucracy has proved one of the great obstacles to Marxists. Their own accusations and counter-accusations give a fair clue to an understanding of some of its underlying causes. For Marxists have not denied that what is called party democracy is, in many instances, bureaucratic decision of a ruling clique followed by nominal, after the fact, rank-and-file acquiescence, which gives the appearance of democracy.

What are some of the causes of this tendency according to the analysis of the Marxists themselves? First, necessities of party organization have led to greater and greater centralization of power in the hands of a party leadership. Quick decisions must be made from time to time; it is physically impossible to consult the general membership on all matters at all times, and what may appear at first glance to be a routine, administrative decision, may subsequently turn out to be a question of first-rate importance, going to the very essence of party strategy and tactics.

Second, the party leadership generally gets a blank check from its rank-and-file membership. Persons who join a movement dedicated to a new social order very often make an "investment in hope"; convinced of the righteousness of the cause, they are quite content to follow the existing leadership and fit in with the party pattern. While they may be quite alert as regards the inadequacies of capitalism and their nearest Marxian rivals, they are not inclined to think that anything is amiss in their own organization and with their leadership. To be suspicious of the integrity of the latter is to open up the floodgate

and be overwhelmed by doubts. And once so assailed, they do not generally seek solace in a new leadership but rather drop out of the movement altogether, a tendency which may explain in part the phenomenal turnover of membership in the Marxian parties.

Finally, those in positions of top leadership fight fiercely for, and cling tenaciously to, their posts. The desire for personal power and prestige seems as compelling among Left parties as elsewhere. Although in the course of vigorous polemics (inter- and intra-party), charges of personal dishonesty, opportunism and double dealing have been very freely made, one can still exonerate the leadership of being actuated by ignoble motives and simply state that the all-too-human tendency to rationalize and identify the summun bonum of an organization with one's own personal well-being is present among Marxists too.

Here again, it should be noted, the theory of vested interests plays a silent but effective role. Matters which seem unimportant to an outsider loom large from within. Editorship of an insignificant party press, Executive-Secretaryship of a city Local may indeed be small political plums, but they are often salaried posts; fifteen to twenty dollar jobs ~~make~~ possible the combination of practical realism with revolutionary idealism. While fighting for the revolution, Marxists must live too.

Factionalism. Because of inner-party conflicts for leadership posts resulting from political differences, clashes of personality and conflicts of vested interests, Marxian parties are rife with factionalism, i. e., semi-organized rival groups within each party competing for control of the party organization, the election of a given leadership or the adoption of given policies. Defeated factions very frequently raise, with much bitterness, the hue and cry of "bureaucracy" and "no

party democracy". They persist in their contentions, often, until they are expelled, or, convinced that the existing organization is beyond hope of repair, they form another Splinter movement with "correct" leadership and policies.

So far as this writer has been able to observe, factionalism exists in varying degrees in practically all of the Marxian groups and parties to-day, although the Communist party, specifically, holds that it has abolished factions within its organization. The C.P. was also admittedly the stalking grounds of factionalism until about 1928 when Stalin personally intervened, displaced the Lovestone leadership by the present Browder administration. Since that time, save for resignations, there has not been any outward manifestations of factionalism or discontent in that party.

General Summary

Whether one is anti-Marxist or favorably disposed toward any of the Marxian political movements, several broad generalizations may be safely made: (1) Marxists display a number of obvious weaknesses. (2) They have not succeeded in winning over any substantial section of the working class. (3) Their future depends upon a number of subjective and objective factors.

Weaknesses of Marxian Political Movements. Although Marxists find little difficulties in self-justification, they nevertheless recognize that their cause is weakened by a number of factors: (1) Their hopeless disunity on theory and practice. In many instances they work at cross-purposes thereby strengthening rather than weakening their enemies. (2) Their dogmatism. Each seems convinced that his is Marx's own road to salvation; the smaller the group the more articulate, unyielding and

dogmatic. (3) The plague of bureaucracy, the conflict of personalities and vested interests, the discrepancy between party democracy in theory and actual practice have given rise to considerable dissatisfaction among members of all parties. The resulting rampancy of factionalism has wrought havoc. Marxists are factionalists in a double sense: their acrimonious disputes as separate entities; their endless quarrels within each organization. Those who disagree with a particular orientation are often considered (at least in some quarters) as greater enemies of the working class than the capitalists themselves. The use of personal invective has become commonplace, to the great satisfaction of anti-Marxists.

Lack of Headway among American Workers. In moments of pessimism, Marxists have reluctantly admitted (not for public consumption) that objective conditions have been favorable to the growth of Marxism, but their success has not been commensurate with their opportunities. They explain this in numerous ways. (1) The American workers do not identify any revolutionary tradition with themselves, despite some efforts to make revolutionists and working-class heroes of such figures as Washington, Lincoln, Jefferson, and Franklin. By education, training and propaganda, they lack a working class ideology and a class struggle orientation. They have been educated and indoctrinated in favor of the individualist philosophy; their knowledge of economics seems extensive enough, in their own eyes, to disprove the superiority of collectivism over free enterprise and to discuss with some measure of authority why Socialism won't work. In politics, they cling to the two-party system, now supporting one and now the other; the failure of any third party movement to survive in the past indicates how tradition rules

and how that system seems implicitly regarded as sacred and beyond meddling.

(2) Marxists have not found an approach to the masses possessing the dynamic appeal of the capitalists and fascists with which to break down the pro-capitalist ideology. Whether there is a correct approach or whether their case is hopeless because of its patent unsoundness or its essential intellectualism and complexity which workers cannot fathom, or whether they lack competent leadership and adequate funds and institutions with which to overcome their difficulties are questions more easily raised than answered. Their rapid turnover in membership is a significant objective sign of their meager success.

(3) Marxian parties have found it difficult to retain the support and membership of many prominent Marxian intellectuals who at one time or another were actively identified with one of their movements. Disagreements have arisen not only on matters of theoretical approach (for example, the meaning of dialectical materialism and its application by Marxian political parties) but also on questions of tactics for building a mass political movement, democracy within the party, sectarian tendencies, and attitude towards the Soviet Union. (The answer of a given party to the Marxian theoreticians who have left its ranks has been more or less the same: Marxian intellectuals are individualists and free-lancers who do not wish to submit to discipline, direction and the party line; since a revolutionary party cannot function on the basis of individual action, the movement finds itself obliged to dispense with their services.)

(4) Workers who become interested in Marxism are very often bewildered by the complexity of alternatives offered by the Marxists

themselves. To whom shall they turn? In their limited capacities, the claims of each are equally valid. The acrimonious battles of the Marxists drive many away in hopeless disgust.

(5) Finally, much of the thunder of the Marxian parties' program of immediate demands has been cumulatively stolen by the capitalists themselves. The protests of the Marxists, for example, that the New Deal is but a fragment of a Socialist program which cannot succeed alone falls on deaf ears.

Future of Marxian Political Movements

This writer cannot hazard any prediction about the future of Marxism; the Marxists themselves are neither certain nor optimistic.

(1) They recognize a most serious obstacle in their lack of unity and inability to rally about a common program. (2) The ultimate success or failure of the New Deal in solving the problem of unemployment will be a landmark. They do not believe that any reforms within the circumscribed limits of capitalism can do so. In a race between the fascists and the Socialists for control of the American masses, many Marxists do not seem confident of the outcome. Fascist technique is ever more effective than their own. (3) Whether the middle class can be won over to support a Socialist program or whether it will turn to the right is another crucial question. (4) Finally, the imminence of a European war cannot be overlooked. If the United States is drawn in, what will the results be? Can a war crisis be used for the destruction of the capitalist system, especially if the Marxists are divided on support or non-support of that war?

These, at any rate, are some of the issues as the Marxists see them.

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APPENDICES

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GLOSSARY

The following abbreviations occur within these pages. The explanations given are not complete. For further details the reader is referred to the text.

A.F.L.	<u>American Federation of Labor.</u>
A.L.P.	<u>American Labor Party.</u> A political party centered chiefly about the trade union movement in New York.
A.W.P.	<u>American Workers Party.</u> A Left political movement which merged with the Trotskyists to form the Workers Party of the United States in 1934.
C.I.	<u>Communist International.</u>
C.I.O.	<u>Congress of Industrial Organization.</u> (Formerly known as Committee for Industrial Organization.)
C.L.A.	<u>Communist League of America.</u> Designation of the American Trotskyists from 1928 to 1934.
C.L.S.	<u>Communist League of Struggle.</u> Organization founded by Weisbord, a former Trotsky adherent.
Comintern	<u>Communist International.</u>
C.P. C.P., U.S.A.	<u>Communist Party of the United States.</u>
C.P.G.	<u>Communist Party of Germany.</u>
C.P.G.O.	<u>Communist Party Opposition of Germany.</u> Thalheimer-Brandler group, adherents of the International Communist Opposition.
C.P.O.	<u>Communist Party Opposition.</u> Designation of the Lovestone group from 1929 to 1937.
C.P.S.U. C.P., U.S.S.R.	<u>Communist Party of the Soviet Union.</u>
E.C.C.I.	<u>Executive Committee of the Communist International.</u>
G.P.U. O.G.P.U.	<u>Russian Political Police.</u>

I.C.L. International Communist League. A designation of the Trotskyists prior to the organization of the Fourth International in 1938.

I.C.L.L. Independent Communist Labor League. Designation of the Lovestone group in the United States from 1937 to 1938.

I.C.O. International Communist Opposition. International organization to which the Communist Party Opposition of Germany and the Lovestone group of the United States are affiliated.

I.L.L.A. Independent Labor League of America. Designation of the Lovestone group from 1938 to date.

I.L.O. International Left Opposition. A designation of the Trotskyists prior to the organization of the Fourth International.

I.U.P. Industrial Union Party. A splinter movement organized by former members of the Socialist Labor Party.

I.W.W. Industrial Workers of the World. Designation of the American syndicalist movement.

K.A.O.W. Keep America Out of War Congress. An anti-war mass organization, opposed to collective security and supported by numerous political, trade union and other organizations.

L.O. Left Opposition. A designation of the Trotskyists in the Soviet Union about 1924; later applied more widely to Trotsky's adherents elsewhere.

L.R.W.P. League for a Revolutionary Workers Party. Organization founded by Field, a former Trotsky adherent.

N.E.C. National Executive Committee.

P.G. Proletarian Group. Marxian organization of workers, chiefly German, in New York City. Chairman, Wendelin Thomas.

P.O.U.M. Spanish Workers Party of Marxist Unity. An independent revolutionary workers party which opposed the People's Front policies and called for a program of "revolutionary Marxism against fascism."

P.P.A. Proletarian Party of America. Unaffiliated, independent communist party, led by Keracher.

R.I.L.U. Red International of Labor Unions. An international trade union movement organized by Communists from about 1921 to 1935.

R.O. Right Opposition. Originally used to designate followers of Bukharin in the Soviet Union. Also applied to the International Communist Opposition. (Lovestone-Brandler group) prior to 1935.

R.O.T.C. Reserve Officers' Training Corps. Military training units established by the U.S. War Department in high schools and colleges throughout the country.

R.W.L. Revolutionary Workers League. Organization formed by seceding Trotskyists (Oehler and Stamm) when the Workers Party joined the Socialist Party in 1936.

S.L.P. Socialist Labor Party.

S.P. Socialist Party.

S.U. Soviet Union.

S.W.P. Socialist Workers Party. Present designation of official Trotskyist movement in the United States.

T.U.E.L. Trade Union Educational League. A Left bloc organized by the communists within the American Federation of Labor from 1921 to 1929.

T.U.U.L. Trade Union Unity League. The dual union organized by communists from 1929 to 1935. An outgrowth of the T.U.E.L.

U.S.S.R. Union of Socialist Soviet Republics.

U.W.P.A. United Workers Party of America. Former designation of the Groups of Council Communists.

W.P. Workers Party. Designation of official Trotskyist movement from 1934 to 1936.

W.S.P. Workers Socialist Party. An independent Marxian political party. (Not to be confused with the Socialist Workers Party.)

Y.P.S.L. Young Peoples Socialist League. Youth movement of the
Socialist Party.

Y.P.S.L. Young Peoples Socialist League, Fourth International-
(4th Int.) ists. Youth movement of the Socialist Workers
Party.

Y.C.L. Young Communist League.

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WORKERS SOCIALIST PARTY

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THE WESTERN SOCIALIST -- Official Organ of the Socialist Party of
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